

**FOR THE GOOD OF FRANCO-ONTARIANS:
LE DROIT'S EDITORIALS, 1913-1933**

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ABSTRACT

In 1912 the Ontario government tabled Regulation 17 to severely limit teaching in French in provincial schools. Franco-Ontarians launched the newspaper *Le Droit* in March, 1913 to defeat the measure and protect minority language rights. The Oblats de Marie Immaculée, an Ottawa-based Catholic missionary order, provided operational support as it was also expected to act as a “bonne presse” encouraging social Catholicism.

A content analysis of editorials from 1913 to 1933 reveals several changes that positioned *Le Droit* to remain in print after defeating Regulation 17 and the departure of the Oblates. In brief, in *Le Droit*’s initial years it offered a healthy amount of editorial content devoted to fighting Regulation 17, combatting assimilationist threats, and encouraging readers to live according to Catholic doctrine. However, by the late 1910s it diversified its content by paying less and less attention to religious matters while significantly limiting pieces about Regulation 17 and other assimilationist threats. The early half of the 1920s also saw the daily introduce content for readers in Quebec, challenging its initial aim of serving Franco-Ontarians exclusively. Archival material about *Le Droit*’s operations reveals the factors that encouraged its transformation. Financial pressures were a leading reason for seeking to diversify the daily’s editorials. Adopting the “bonne entente” strategy to protecting Franco-Ontarian rights likewise influenced the type of material it published. In short, embracing this strategy meant *Le Droit* printed an increasing number of pieces promoting a proactive approach to surviving instead of editorials assailing assimilationist threats.

What emerges from this exploration is a glimpse into the mindset of Franco-Ontarian lay and clerical leaders. Their decision-making was not hampered by needing to remain wedded to their initial intentions or strategies. They instead adopted very practical solutions to internal and external challenges they faced. The evidence also shows that the unique, and often changing, circumstances and conditions in Ontario significantly impacted what opportunities could be used to ensure *Le Droit* remained relevant and in print. The pragmatism they demonstrated in guiding the daily’s editorial policies not only kept the daily on newsstands but was paramount in the fight to ensure the minority’s survival.

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The journey to completing a doctoral dissertation can be quite linear and, in theory, simple: upon finishing a B.A. and an M.A., a student gains entrance to a doctoral program where they take about two years to complete their coursework and comprehensive exams. Once those hurdles are cleared, a year or two is spent doing primary research followed by a couple of years writing. The budding scholar is now ready to defend and, after a few final tweaks, submit his/her dissertation to the School of Graduate studies for final processing. Voila! You are now done and “Ph.D.” appears next to your name.

I envy those who had this type of “best case” scenario, wrapping up the entire process from undergraduate to doctoral completion in a decade or so. My own journey was certainly very uncommon as it was laced with several stops/starts over more than two decades. My dream of being a historian has taken me from Montreal to Ottawa followed by Hamilton and then to Toronto. Along the way I took classes at six universities. Such a protracted, challenging process would not have been possible without the inspiration of others, a ton of encouragement and, of course, a lot of assistance.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Figures.....	vi
 Chapter One: Introduction—A battle organ emerges in Ontario.....	1
What <i>Le Droit</i> tells us.....	4
Historiography.....	8
Sources.....	29
Methodology.....	34
Chapters.....	37
 Chapter Two: <i>Le Droit</i> in print—a measured transformation.....	41
A newspaper to fight for Franco-Ontarians rights.....	43
<i>Le Droit</i> 's shifting focus.....	53
<i>Le Droit</i> changes its format and style.....	59
<i>Le Droit</i> reaches out to a different audience.....	70
<i>Le Droit</i> 's editorial page reflects its evolution.....	74
<i>Le Droit</i> 's role in provincial politics.....	88
<i>Le Droit</i> 's involvement in federal politics.....	95
Concerns over <i>Le Droit</i> 's interference in federal politics.....	102
Conclusion.....	107
 Chapter Three: <i>Le Droit</i> 's endorses respectable conduct.....	109
General Topic Values & Ideals—Subheading Morality.....	110
General Topic Values & Ideals—Subheading Use of Income.....	124
General Topic Values & Ideals—Subheading Temperance/Prohibition.....	135
Conclusion.....	147
 Chapter Four: <i>Le Droit</i> 's ideal community... ..	150
General Topic Education—Subheading Higher Education.....	151
General Topic Education—Subheading Early Education.....	157
General Topic Education—Subheading Lifelong Learning.....	166
General Topic Family—Subheading Gender Roles.....	171
General Topic Family—Subheading Divorce.....	183
General Topic Family—Subheading Reproduction.....	187
Conclusion.....	190
 Chapter Five: <i>Le Droit</i> 's perspective on making a living.....	192
General Topic Economy & Business—Subheading Agriculture/Ruralism.....	193
General Topic Economy & Business—Subheading Commercial Participation.....	208
General Topic Economy & Business—Subheading Cooperatives.....	222
Conclusion.....	227

Chapter Six: <i>Le Droit</i> 's outlook on class relations.....	228
General Topic Labour Relations—Subheading Organized Labour.....	230
General Topic Labour Relations—Subheading Immorality in Business & Class Issues.....	246
General Topic Labour Relations—Subheading Socialism & Communism.....	256
Conclusion.....	264
Chapter Seven: Conclusion.....	265
Changes related to Regulation 17 and protecting minority rights.....	266
Changes related to promoting social Catholicism.....	271
Potential research avenues.....	278
Bibliography.....	282
Appendices	
Appendix A: <i>Le Droit</i> 's Most Prominent Editorialists—1913 to 1933.....	294
Appendix B: Thematic Index of General Topics with Related Subheadings.....	295
Appendix C: General Topics per Year by Percentage.....	300
Appendix D: General Topics per Year by Rank.....	301
Appendix E: General Topic Values & Ideals and its Subheadings per Year.....	302
Appendix F: General Topic Education and its Subheadings per Year.....	303
Appendix G: General Topic Family and its Subheadings per Year.....	304
Appendix H: General Topic Economy & Business and its Subheadings per Year.....	305
Appendix I: General Topic Labour Relations and its Subheadings per Year.....	306
Appendix J: Distribution of Subheadings and Subjects in the General Topic Labour Relations.....	307

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Catholic Organ.....	55
Figure 2: Combat Newspaper.....	56
Figure 3: Political Independence.....	58
Figure 4: General Topic Religion and Language.....	76
Figure 5: Editorial content in the General Topic Religion and Language about Regulation 17.....	77
Figure 6: General Topic Values & Ideals.....	79
Figure 7: General Topic Family.....	80
Figure 8: General Topic Education.....	81
Figure 9: General Topic General Matters.....	82
Figure 10: General Topic Economy & Business.....	83
Figure 11: General Topic Labour Relations.....	85
Figure 12: General Topic Politics.....	86
Figure 13: General Topic Public Policies.....	87
Figure 14: Editorial content in the General Topic Values & Ideals from the Subheading Morality.....	112
Figure 15: Editorial content in the General Topic Values & Ideals from the Subheading Use of Income.....	125
Figure 16: Editorial content in the General Topic Values & Ideals from the Subheading Temperance/Prohibition.....	136
Figure 17: Editorial content in the General Topic Education from the Subheading Higher Education.....	152
Figure 18: Editorial content in the General Topic Education from the Subheading Early Education.....	158
Figure 19: Editorial content in the General Topic Education from the Subheading Lifelong Learning.....	167
Figure 20: Editorial content in the General Topic Family from the Subheading Gender Roles.....	173
Figure 21: Editorial content in the General Topic Family from the Subheading Divorce.....	184

Figure 22: Editorial content in the General Topic Family from the Subheading Reproduction.....	188
Figure 23: Editorial content in the General Topic Economy & Business from the Subheading Agriculture/Ruralism.....	194
Figure 24: Editorial content in the General Topic Economy & Business from the Subheading Commercial Participation.....	209
Figure 25: Editorial content in the General Topic Economy & Business from the Subheading Cooperatives.....	222
Figure 26: Editorial content in the General Topic Labour Relations from the Subheading Organized Labour.....	232
Figure 27: Editorial content in the General Topic Labour Relations from the Subheading Immorality in Business & Class Issues.....	247
Figure 28: Editorial content in the General Topic Labour Relations from the Subheading Socialism & Communism.....	257

INTRODUCTION

A battle organ emerges in Ontario

In 1912 James P. Whitney's Conservative government tabled Regulation 17 in the Ontario legislature to significantly limit instruction in French in the province's elementary schools. Ontario's French-language Catholic minority, just about 225 000 strong or slightly more than eight percent of the province's overall population¹, hurriedly organized a campaign to block its implementation.² Lay and clerical leaders from the province's eastern region formed the Syndicat d'oeuvres sociales limitée which launched the Ottawa-based newspaper *Le Droit* to galvanize the province's French-speaking population against this discriminatory law.³ The historiography about this "*journal de combat*" asserts that the organ was an important force in the battle which led Regulation 17 to be shelved in 1927.⁴ Given that *Le Droit* was published to defeat Regulation 17, one may have expected it to shutter its operations when the battle was won.

¹ According to 1911 census figures, Ontario was home to 202 387 French-speaking people (8.02% of the province's overall population of 2 523 274). Population data from the 1921 census showed a slight increase in the group's overall population figure as it crept up to 248 275 representing 8.46% of the province's overall provincial population of 2 933 662. Robert Choquette, *La foi : Gardienne de la langue en Ontario, 1900-1950* (Montréal : Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1987), 24.

² For more on this matter, see Robert Choquette, *Langue et Religion : histoire des conflits anglo-français de l'Ontario* (Ottawa : Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1977); Michel Bock and François Charbonneau, eds., *Le siècle du Règlement 17. Regards sur une crise scolaire et nationale* (Sudbury : Prise de Parole, 2015); Jean-Pierre Gaboury, "La vie politique de l'Ontario français" in *Actes du Colloque sur la situation de la recherche sur la vie française en Ontario* (Ottawa : ACFAS, 1975); Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987); Danielle Juteau and Lise Séguin-Kimpton, "La collectivité franco-ontarienne : structuration d'un espace symbolique et politique" in *Les Franco-Ontariens*, Cornelius Jaenen, editor. (Ottawa : Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1993) 265-304; and Victor Simon, *Le Règlement XVII : Sa mise en vigueur à travers l'Ontario, 1912-1927* (Sudbury : Université de Sudbury, 1983).

³ The eastern part of Ontario was home to the greatest agglomeration of Franco-Ontarians. According to census figures from 1911, almost 102 000 of the group's overall population resided in the Eastern Region of the province (50.3%) compared to 47 543 (23.5%) in the Northern Region, 31 256 in the South West Region (15.4%), 21 699 in the Central Region (10.7%). Fernand Ouellet, "L'évolution de la présence francophone en Ontario : une perspective économique et sociale" in *Les Franco-Ontariens*, Cornelius Jaenen, editor (Ottawa : Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1993), 135.

⁴ The following studies, amongst others, present the newspaper's role in this campaign: Pierre Esdras Terrien, "Historique-Éphémérides du journal *Le Droit*, 1913-1949" (Ottawa : Le Droit, 1948); Jean Taillefer, *Le Droit et son histoire* (Ottawa : Le Droit, 1955); and Jacques Gravel, "Quelques aspects de la vie des Franco-Ontariens durant les années de la Grande Dépression, 1930-1939" (Thèse de maîtrise. Toronto: York University, 1980).

Yet the newspaper continued to exist past this mark and, in fact, remains in print today—nearly 100 years since the fight against Regulation 17 ended.⁵ Delving into the daily's launch shows that it was not only intended as a tool to block the enactment of this policy. The Missionary Oblates of Marie Immaculate, an Ottawa-based Catholic order which controlled *Le Droit's* content in its first two decades, supported the newspaper from its launch because it could safeguard the province's French-speaking Catholic community's cultural distinctiveness. In brief, the Oblates recognized that the newspaper could be an instrument of ideological socialization to protect the minority from assimilation into Ontario's predominantly English-speaking Protestant population. *Le Droit*, therefore, appeared on newsstands with a dual purpose: combat Regulation 17, as well as other threats against Franco-Ontarian minority rights, and encourage readers to live according to social Catholicism—a blend of progressive and traditional perspectives.⁶ The latter mandate saw a significant proportion of *Le Droit's* editorials touch upon a wide range of temporal issues, including the importance of the family, appropriate gender roles, acceptable moral conduct, the suitable responsibilities of Church and State, the place of organized labour in the evolving industrial economy, as well as the impact of the intensification of industrialization and urbanization.

⁵ The paper reached a circulation of approximately 7 000 within five years of launching and climbed to 12 000 by 1920. It steadily increased—16 000 in 1930, 19 000 in 1940, 26 000 in 1950, 33 000 in 1960 and 38 000 in 1970—until it reached its peak circulation of 48 000 in the early 1980s. Marcel Laurence, "Les Oblats et le journal *Le Droit*" *L'Église canadienne*. 31, no. 4 (1998), 133.

⁶ Social Catholicism emerged out of the mid-nineteenth century writings of Archbishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler. The German was focused on finding solutions to the socio-economic problems brought on by the Industrial Revolution. Marvin L. Krier Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements* (Connecticut: Twenty Third Publications, 1998), 5. Ketteler, influenced by the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, believed that the Church must take an active role remedying "the social question" as early capitalism's ruthless competition and harsh individualism had created significant wealth inequalities. *Ibid.*, 6. The cleric's ideas gained an increasingly large audience. *L'Association catholique* was, for instance, launched to spread the early concepts of "social catholicism". The Fribourg Union, one of the many "social catholic" study groups made up of lay and clerical experts, was very influential in framing many of the ideas in Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* papal encyclical. *Ibid.*, 16. For more on this matter, see Charles E. Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis* (Georgetown: Georgetown University Press, 2002).

It is important to note that the lay and clerical leaders who spearheaded the publication did not envision an apolitical newspaper. *Le Droit* was expected to offer opinions on political topics, politicians, and political ideologies, yet it was mentioned when it first appeared that it would act as an unbiased observer foregoing ties to political parties or political players. This hands-off strategy also included not interfering in the electoral process on anyone's behalf. The newspaper's controllers were convinced that having a measure of independence from federal and provincial political parties would better allow it to defend Franco-Ontarians' rights. In brief, total impartiality and remaining out of the political fray would provide the freedom to assail any politicians or party who sought to erode their language or religious rights.

The above description speaks to the newspaper's purported mission and the approaches it expected to use to meet its aims. That being said, delving into *Le Droit's* content correspondingly offers a window into the mindset of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority when Canada's transformation to new modern realities was intensifying. In particular, the organ showcased the group's ideological foundation, particular beliefs, and specific positions on numerous matters during this important transition. *Le Droit's* material specifically provides an opportunity to pinpoint the ideological similarities between the Franco-Ontarian community it catered to and the remainder of French-speaking Canada. Most importantly, a content analysis surfaces notable differences about individual and collective practices. The dissimilarities point to the fact that the national French-speaking Catholic minority should not be considered a uniform block of people who supported the same perspectives and ideological stances.

Moreover, exploring *Le Droit* allows us to add to the debate about how the Catholic Church navigated the era's significant socio-economic changes. Since clerical leaders controlled the newspaper's content in its initial two decades, the publication provides unique insight into whether those in the Church remained committed to very traditional ideals or if there might have existed some willingness to adopt progressive positions in the face of changing conditions. As will be shown, the organ's content reinforces the interpretation that, although some traditional viewpoints endured, pragmatic decision-making led its leaders to transform their organ's format, scope and approach almost from its launch. Most importantly, exploring the newspaper's points of views and related archival materials demonstrates how Franco-Ontarian lay and clerical leaders held positions which one might not have expected given their links to Quebec's French population and devotion to Catholicism. The uniqueness of their socio-economic, political, and demographic circumstances, it will be argued, played a significant part in compelling those who controlled the organ to support perspectives absent from other "bonne presse". In the end, exploring *Le Droit* buttresses the general interpretation that contextual specificity is an important determinant of practices and social, political, economic and intellectual perspectives.

What *Le Droit* tells us

A quantitative examination of *Le Droit*'s editorial content in its first few years shows it was predominantly devoted to fighting Regulation 17, protecting Franco-Ontarian minority rights, and sponsoring social Catholicism. This orientation, however, did not last very long as within a few years of appearing it adjusted its editorial format and scope. More specifically, a statistical review of content regrouped by thematic categories reveals that shortly after *Le Droit*'s birth other topics became a mainstay of the editorial page. By the end of the 1910s, editorials

about political issues, economic and business matters, and labour relations appeared much more frequently than those about blocking Regulation 17, defending Franco-Ontarians rights, and following social Catholicism. An analysis of archival material shows financial considerations were in part responsible for prompting the newspaper to adapt its format and scope. Although the Oblates provided funding to establish the publication, by the five-year mark *Le Droit* was facing economic hardships. Its lay and clerical leaders recognized that, since the missionary order was not wealthy enough to perpetually top up *Le Droit*'s accounts, the only way to ensure its viability would be to modify the newspaper's style which included diversifying its content. These changes were intended to attract a larger readership and, by consequence, increase advertising revenue. It must be noted that the adopted approach was in line with how most dailies operated at the turn of the 20th century.⁷ These financial pressures also compelled *Le Droit* to drop its Ontario-centric scope. In short, it was decided to increasingly focus its editorials on matters relevant to the province of Quebec, especially, municipalities directly across the Ottawa River. Starting in 1922, the newspaper published a separate editorial page for those on the north shore of the Ottawa River and, within two years, even opened a branch office in Hull. By the early 1920s, *Le Droit* was a far cry from the Ontario-dedicated *journal de combat* its founders said would predominantly focus on protecting Franco-Ontarian minority rights and encourage the adoption of social Catholicism. This shift shows that those who oversaw what appeared in the newspaper adopted a pragmatic approach as they were willing to embrace change if it suited their ultimate aim: the protection and promotion of Franco-Ontarian culture.

⁷ While political and religious newspapers financed by lay or clerical organizations were the mainstay of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by the beginning of the twentieth-century most newspapers used an independent commercial business model to finance their operations. For more on this topic, see Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd. Publishers, 2000).

It is worth mentioning how diversifying its editorial content and growing the newspaper's readership outside the province likewise corresponded with *Le Droit* adopting a new approach in protecting Franco-Ontarians from assimilation. At the outset, the newspaper employed a purely reactive defensive strategy focused on countering Regulation 17 and other threats to minority rights. However, by the late 1910s it took a much more proactive line of attack which encouraged the minority to increase its socio-economic strength and leverage any advantages at its disposal. It was hoped that this strategy would increase the population's resiliency in the face of a powerful majority. *Le Droit* resultantly cut the share of editorials trumpeting the advantages of a rural and agricultural lifestyle. Instead, readers were increasingly implored to launch businesses, pursue a post-secondary education leading to high wage jobs, access well-paid positions in the federal civil service and employ all types of communal economic nationalist tactics. Part of this proactive strategy even led the newspaper to print numerous editorials calling on women to participate in the political arena. These opinions were certainly a significant departure from the attitudes *Le Droit* expressed at its start. Nevertheless, adopting these strategies, it explained, would greatly increase Franco-Ontarian economic and political influence to counter its demographic weakness. Opposing legislative threats to language rights was certainly essential, but Franco-Ontarians needed to take matters in their own hands to better protect themselves from being assimilated. Those at *Le Droit* increasingly argued as of the late 1910s that building its economic strength to grow its political influence was the only way to inoculate the minority from attacks on its rights.

Apart from significantly modifying its format and scope as well as broadening its proactive survival strategy, *Le Droit* also altered its founding intention to refrain from having ties

with political parties and politicians, or playing a role in political affairs. The newspaper's private correspondence reveals that it developed increasingly close relationships with several politicians and various parties at the provincial and federal level. *Le Droit* likewise repeatedly played an active part in influencing the electoral landscape at both levels. Its efforts included helping recruit candidates to run in elections, finding nominees to be recommended as Senators, and supporting preferred candidates or parties in multiple election campaigns. Although it does not appear that the publication received financial compensation for these efforts, *Le Droit's* influence over provincial and federal political electoral outcomes certainly transgressed the fact that it initially positioned itself as an impartial political observer acting above the political fray. This interventionist approach, those at *Le Droit* surmised, was necessary to help defeat Regulation 17 and protect the Franco-Ontarian community. Transforming its style and scope, embracing a new proactive strategy to protect minority rights, and abandoning its intention to remain politically independent all demonstrate that those who controlled *Le Droit* were amenable to drastically altering their established practices to counter assimilationist threats. Choosing to change *Le Droit*, it will be argued here, demonstrates that the lay and clerical leaders of the community were not tied to outlooks and ideals that discouraged innovation and change. Their readiness to alter the newspaper to such a significant degree is, in fact, evidence of their pragmatic inclinations. Most significantly, it demonstrates conditions specific to their experience—i.e. seeking to survive in a minority setting and having relatively limited financial resources or political clout—significantly influenced their perspectives and ideals.

Historiography

The few studies about *Le Droit*'s first decades have argued that the publication stayed true to its founding aim of focusing on fighting Regulation 17. Esdras Terrien, who held various executive roles early on at the newspaper, authored a brief study which appeared in 1948 celebrating the organ's impact. His "Historique-Éphémérides du journal *Le Droit*, 1913-1948" provides an overview of: the events that led the Syndicat d'oeuvres sociales limitée to establish a newspaper; a synopsis of administrative changes which occurred over the organ's first 35 years; and a sample of its editorial content. Terrien noted that at the outset, *Le Droit* was "... (un) journal fondé précisément aux fin (sic) de combattre une législation persécutrice et défendre les écoles de la minorité française de l'Ontario".⁸ Jean Taillefer provided the first historical perspective of the daily by an "outsider". Although his short examination is a more detailed overview of *Le Droit*'s growth from the 1920s to early 1950, his perspective is very similar to Terrien's. Taillefer begins his work by echoing Terrien's view that the government's plan to curtail Franco-Ontarian language rights touched off a movement which inspired the introduction of a newspaper to embolden the minority to defend itself.⁹ *Le Droit*'s appearance and early years, according to him, are intrinsically linked to fighting Regulation 17. Jacques Gravel offered the earliest examination of the newspaper according to the rigours of academic expectations. Gravel, in his examination of how the Great Depression promoted change within the Franco-Ontarian community, including the scope of its leading organizations, went so far as to state that, in its early years, the daily was obsessed with the issue of defeating Regulation 17.¹⁰ This interpretation echoes the viewpoints of Terrien and Taillefer. Luc Laporte, whose M.A. thesis focused on bringing to light the ideological cornerstones of Ontario's French-speaking minority

⁸ Terrien, "Historique-Éphémérides du journal *Le Droit*, 1913-1948", VIII.

⁹ Taillefer, *Le Droit*, 7.

¹⁰ Gravel, "Quelques aspects de la vie des Franco-Ontariens", 65.

by examining its leading figures and institutions, similarly mentioned “...de 1913 à 1927, *Le Droit* mène une lutte acharnée contre le Règlement 17, et pour le respect des droits de la minorité française de l’Ontario.”¹¹ More recently, the Oblate Marcel Laurence released a five-page article examining how his religious order ensured *Le Droit* focused on spiritual matters. Laurence nevertheless echoed his predecessors by noting “la lutte pour les écoles françaises constitue le thème sans cesse repris dans *Le Droit* des premières années.”¹² His article adds to the body of work claiming *Le Droit* lived up to the intentions of the Syndicat d’oeuvres sociales limitée, that was to commit itself to fighting Regulation 17 and to defending Franco-Ontarian rights. According to all of these works, the newspaper’s first decades were without reservation about fulfilling its *journal de combat* mandate.

Aside from agreeing that the daily was indeed primarily focused on fighting Regulation 17, previous historical interpretations likewise agree that it followed the Catholic “bonne presse” approach its founders intended. While *Le Droit* appeared on newsstands in response to Whitney’s discriminatory policy, those who have explored the newspaper’s early years recognize that it also served to spread the Catholic doctrine. Terrien, for his part, surmised that *Le Droit* fought against Regulation 17 “...tout en s’occupant en outre des intérêts supérieurs de toute la race et des intérêts sacrés de l’Église.”¹³ Laurence made the same point by noting that, aside from fighting for language schooling rights, the newspaper supported causes in line with Catholic doctrine.¹⁴ Jean de Bonville, an historian interested in how newspapers were

¹¹ Luc Laporte, “Le journal *Le Droit* : miroir de l’identité franco-ontarienne” (Thèse de maîtrise. Québec : Université Laval, 1986), 11.

¹² Laurence, “Les Oblats”, 130.

¹³ Terrien, *Historique-Éphémérides du journal Le Droit*, VIII.

¹⁴ Laurence, “Les Oblats”, 130.

transformed at the beginning of the twentieth-century, echoed this argument by stating that even though the greater majority of *Le Droit*'s employees and executives were laymen, "(l)'influence cléricale demeure néanmoins déterminante. Elle conditionne fortement le contenu du journal et sa politique rédactionnelle."¹⁵ The direct influence of the Oblates over *Le Droit*'s content, observers have maintained, led to the publication of material which mimicked Canada's leading French-language Catholic organ, *L'Action catholique*.¹⁶ According to them, the material in the former imitated the traditional ultramontane outlook found in the latter.¹⁷ For instance, the Ottawa-based newspaper regularly printed editorials arguing that the Church had a legitimate authority over many civil matters.¹⁸ Historians have also noted that *Le Droit* unabashedly promoted a rural and agricultural existence.¹⁹ Editorials, we have been told, consistently championed the benefits of a bucolic rural existence compared to the pernicious conditions of urban settings.²⁰ It has also been mentioned that *Le Droit* supported a conservative social structure with traditional gender roles. For instance, it was not shy in mentioning that a woman's role in society was expected to focus mainly on household matters.²¹ All of these positions are presented as proof that *Le Droit* should be grouped among typical early 20th century "bonne presse" organs dedicated to promoting the traditional social Catholicism of the Catholic Church.

¹⁵ Jean de Bonville, *La presse québécoise de 1884 à 1914* (Québec : Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1988), 179; Jean Taillefer also touched upon this argument in 1955 by stating "*Le Droit* répand dans toute la province et même à l'extérieur la pensée Catholique et française." Taillefer, *Le Droit*, 25. Jacques Gravel likewise stated "...dans l'ensemble, cependant, l'on peut dire que c'est le clergé catholique qui contrôlait *Le Droit* et l'ACFÉO." Gravel, "Quelques aspects de la vie", 4.

¹⁶ Pierre Savard, "Relations avec le Québec" in *Les Franco-Ontariens*, Cornelius Jaenen, editor, (Ottawa : Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1993), 235.

¹⁷ Dominique Lajoie, "Charles Charlebois : Un clerc au cœur de la formation identitaire Franco-Ontarienne. 1910-1920" (Mémoire de maîtrise. Ottawa : Université d'Ottawa, 2004), 44 and de Bonville, *La presse québécoise*, 176. Father Charlebois is described as a staunch supporter of the ultramontane viewpoint. Lajoie, "Charles Charlebois", 35.

¹⁸ Ibid., 35.

¹⁹ Taillefer, *Le Droit*, 71.

²⁰ Gravel, "Quelques aspects de la vie", 51.

²¹ Ibid., 80.

What about the goal of remaining politically unbiased to have the freedom to offer its opinions on political matters? Few explorations have focused on whether *Le Droit* stayed true to this aim. Paul-Francois Sylvestre, popular historian and cultural critic, briefly mentioned the issue of the organ's political independence in his 1984 work, *Les journaux de l'Ontario Francais, 1858-1983*. Sylvestre alluded to the fact that *Le Droit* was not reluctant to pledge its support to any political party so long as its policies were in the best interest of the province's French-speaking Catholic population. This approach, the author noted, consequently led it to back the provincial Liberal Party, the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party whenever it saw fit.²² This tactic was not surprising as it was the expected practice for newspapers, including "bonne presse", to offer their opinions on political matters—including who they preferred at election time. That being said, passing judgement is quite different from the type of partiality that comes from having formal ties with a party or politician. Unfortunately none of those who have studied *Le Droit* have offered an opinion on this question.

Interpretations about *Le Droit* substantiate the scholarly consensus regarding the ideals of Ontario's French-language minority as well as how the Catholic Church influenced its viewpoints. Firstly, researchers argue that the colonists who arrived in Ontario from Lower Canada/Canada East in the nineteenth-century held inherently traditional social views shared by all French Canadians. We are told that they subscribed to "...l'idéologie canadienne-française du dix-neuvième siècle. Ils amènent dans ce territoire qu'ils défrichent la fierté canadienne-française, l'ambition du colonisateur qui fait reculer les frontières de son pays et le sentiment de

²² Paul-François Sylvestre, *Les journaux de l'Ontario français, 1858-1983* (Sudbury : Université Sudbury, 1984), 4.

témoigner en faveur des valeurs éternelles.”²³ Secondly, historians agree about the primacy the Catholic Church had on influencing the ideals of this minority. Robert Choquette, for one, believes that it played a predominant role in shaping Ontario’s French-speaking community. For him, the Church was the most important social institution for this population up until the middle of the twentieth-century.²⁴ Although from a Marxist point of view, Donald Dennie supports the notion that it took until the second half of the last century for lay figures to replace clerics at the helm of Ontario’s French-speaking community.²⁵ The Church’s dominant influence stemmed from the fact that the province’s linguistic minority used it as a protective agent against the assimilationist threats of the English-speaking Protestant majority. As a result of this defensive strategy, the parish became the group’s fulcrum as it fought to preserve its linguistic and religious nature.²⁶ As Gaétan Gervais argues “...le nationalisme catholique est (devenu) l’idéologie mobilisatrice de la communauté (franco-ontarienne)”.²⁷ What ultimately emerged was a brand of nationalism whereby the Church took a very prominent role in many temporal matters. According to this interpretation, it held an exalted position for the better part of the twentieth century.²⁸ As will be outlined below, Quebec’s French-speaking population adopted the same

²³ Jean Lapointe, “L’historiographie et la construction de l’identité ontarioise” in *Identité et cultures nationales : L’Amérique française en mutation*, Simon Langlois, editor (Québec : Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1995), 153. See also Gaétan Gervais’s *Des gens de résolution : le passage du Canada français à l’Ontario français* (Sudbury : Éditions Prise de parole, 2003) and Victor Simon, “Le Règlement XVII” (1912-1927) *Revue du Nouvel Ontario*. No. 18, (1996), 123-192 as well as Francois-Olivier Dorais’s “Gaétan Gervais : témoin et agent d’une mutation référentielle en Ontario français” *Mens*. Vol. XIII, n° 2 (2013), 59-99.

²⁴ Robert Choquette, “L’Église de l’Ontario français” in *Les Franco-Ontariens*, Cornelius Jaenen, editor. (Ottawa : Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1993), 201.

²⁵ Donald Dennie, “De la difficulté d’être idéologue franco-ontarien” *Revue du Nouvel Ontario*. No. 1 (1978), 74.

²⁶ Gaétan Gervais, “L’Ontario français, 1821-1910” in *Les Franco-Ontariens*, Cornelius Jaenen, editor (Ottawa : Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1993), 202.

²⁷ Gaétan Gervais. *Des gens de résolution : Le passage du «Canada français» à l’«Ontario français»* (Sudbury : Les Éditions Prise de Parole, 2003), 23.

²⁸ Serge Dupuis and Stéphane Savard have recently posited that historical explorations about Franco-Ontarians can be divided into three parts: Studies up to 1960 focused on examining the emergence of a French presence in Ontario from the colonial era to the conflicts about schooling in the 20th century. Meanwhile a professional class of Franco-Ontarian historians from 1965 to 1995 provided a solid base of historical explorations about Ontario’s French-speaking catholic minority. Much of this material focused on the emergence of an institutionalized network in the

clerico-nationalist approach to ensure it would not be subsumed into Canada's majority English-speaking Protestant society.²⁹

Several historians go further by arguing that Ontario's clergy subscribed to an ultramontane orthodoxy dedicated to protecting the traditional established order.³⁰ The focal point of this outlook was the encouragement of an agricultural and rural lifestyle. The Church continuously instructed the province's French-speaking population to embrace life on the farm away from industrial centers.³¹ A rural existence dedicated to farming, the clerics maintained, would allow Catholics to live in a manner where spirituality was their primary concern instead of the possession of material goods—which transfixed city-dwellers who lived off the avails of manufacturing or industry.³² We learn that the province's French-speaking Catholic minority, as a consequence of following ultramontane principles pervasive throughout the French Canadian community, remained wedded to a very traditional way of life which permeated all aspects of their community. Sociologist Roger Bernard emphasizes this point clearly when he mentions that “(l’)Ontario Français est issu d’une société canadienne-française religieuse, traditionnelle, rurale et sous-scolarisée, caractérisée par une infériorité socio-économique endémique. En général, les

province as well as its relationship with the “mother country” in Quebec. The latest wave of historians focuses on intellectual history as they continue to examine the experience of French Canada and, of course, the place of Franco-Ontarians within this community. Serge Dupuis and Stéphane Savard, “Arpenté, défriché, mais pas encore entièrement labouré : le champ de l’historiographie franco-ontarienne en bref” *Bulletin d’histoire politique*. Volume 24, number 2 (2016), 11.

²⁹ A similar situation emerged in Acadia. For more on this similarity, see Michelle Landry, *L’Acadie politique. Histoire sociopolitique de l’Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick* (Québec : Presses de l’Université Laval, 2015).

³⁰ This group includes, amongst others, Jacques Gravel (“Quelques aspects de la vie des Franco-Ontariens”), Robert Choquette (*La foi gardienne de la langue en Ontario, 1900-1950*. Montréal : Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1987), Roger Bernard (*De Québécois à Ontariens*), Gaétan Gervais (“L’Ontario français, 1821-1910”) and, more recently, Dominique Lajoie (“Charles Charlebois”).

³¹ Fernand Ouellet, “Économie et société minoritaires. Propos incertains sur l’économie et la minorité francophone en Ontario : vers un nouveau regard sur le passé et le présent franco-ontariens” *Revue du Nouvel Ontario*. No. 8 (1986), 105.

³² Paul-François Sylvestre, *Nos entrepreneurs : premier panorama* (Ottawa : Éditions L’Interligne, 1996), 29.

Franco-ontariens sont d'origine prolétarienne, exercent des métiers manuels ou mécaniques, se retrouvent dans le secteur primaire et sont peu instruits.”³³ According to these scholars, traditionalism was the minority's hallmark well into the twentieth-century. They contend that it would not be until about the mid-point of that century that the Franco-Ontarian minority began to reject the cloistered rural traditionalism supported by their Church officials. At this point, Franco-Ontarians joined the rest of the provincial population which had embraced the modern trappings and viewpoints of an industrialized urban society.³⁴ Although he agrees with the inherent traditionalism of clerical and lay leadership in French Ontario, historian Fernand Ouellet nuances this interpretation by showing that a good proportion of Franco-Ontarians were urban dwellers who worked in the industrial economy.³⁵ Ouellet argues, in fact, that the group urbanized before their Québécois cousins.

In a way, the historiography of Franco-Ontarian ideologies in the 20th century has remained tied to Quebec's historiography during the Quiet Revolution when two schools of thought fiercely debated the causes of French Canada's traditionalism but agreed on its predominance.³⁶ According to historians of both the Laval School and the Montreal School, the

³³ Bernard, *De Québécois à Ontariens*, 99.

³⁴ Denis Gratton, “La culture politique de l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario” (Thèse de maîtrise. Québec : Université Laval, 1977), 18.

³⁵ For more on this perspective, see Fernand Ouellet, *L'Ontario français dans le Canada français avant 1911. Contribution à l'histoire sociale* (Sudbury : Prise de parole, 2005) and Guy Gaudreau, *L'histoire des mineurs du Nord ontarien et québécois 1886-1945* (Sillery : Les éditions Septentrion, 2003).

³⁶ Researchers contend that the cultural and ideological links between the two groups, although separated by an arbitrary border, are unmistakable. For instance, Fernand Ouellet has mentioned that French Canadians in Ontario shared similar cultural and ideological perspectives because a significant proportion of their demographic growth remained tied to Quebecers relocating in their province. Fernand Ouellet, *L'Ontario français dans le Canada français avant 1911. Contribution à l'histoire sociale* (Sudbury : Prise de parole, 2005), 54. Lucia Ferretti adds that this migration “...a entraîné celle de l'Église Québécoise à sa suite. Des français très près de Bourget, tels Mgr Guigues et Charbonnel, sont évêques des diocèses d'Ottawa et Toronto.” Lucia Ferretti, *Brève histoire de l'Église catholique au Québec* (Montréal : Boréal, 1999), 66. According to Michel Bock, the ideological links between the

majority French-speaking population of Quebec remained wedded to a static traditional ideology centered on the promotion of an agricultural lifestyle, the predominance of the Catholic Church and an auxiliary role for the State in society, the preservation of the privileges of the dominant classes, and anti-liberalism.³⁷ Many historians have argued this worldview came about because the Catholic Church had a predominant role in shaping the ideals of French Canadians.

Historians assert that the Church emerged as a leading institution shaping the ideals of French-speaking Canadians as far back as the mid-1850s.³⁸ Ignace Bourget, the Bishop of Montreal from 1840 to 1876, is perceived by many as being largely responsible for how the Church rose to prominence in French-Canadian society beginning in the second half of the nineteenth-century.³⁹

In brief, it is noted that he adeptly used his power to ensure the Church, not the State, would oversee education, health, and social services in Quebec.⁴⁰ Oversight in these spheres provided clerics an uncontested opportunity to influence the ideals of French-speaking Canadians. The *Syllabus of Errors* of 1864 provides a telling snapshot of the perspective the Catholic Church espoused in that era. This document is noted for “condemn(ing) modern ideas...and led to the

two communities was so strong that what developed was a type of solidarity that transcended local, regional, and provincial divides. Michel Bock, “De la solidarité canadienne-française à l’écèlement des références: la mutation des identités québécoise et franco-ontarienne” in *Les relations Québec-Ontario. Un destin partagé ?*, A. Brassard, L. Côté et J.-F. Savard, eds. (Québec : Presses de l’Université du Québec, 2011), 84.

³⁷ This interpretation includes two schools of thought on what caused this societal backwardness: Michel Brunet, Guy Frégault and Maurice Séguin represent the “Montréal” perspective that emerged from historians teaching at the Université de Montréal. This viewpoint rests on the argument made by Abbé Lionel Groulx that the British Conquest was to blame for the political and economic inferiority of Quebec’s French-speaking population in the twentieth-century. Jean Hamelin, Marcel Trudel and Fernand Ouellet, founding members of the “Québec” perspective teaching out of the Université Laval, argue that the mentality of the population caused the province to remain backwards. They believe that much of the problem rests in how the Catholic Church controlled the education system and the curriculum until the 1960s.

³⁸ Fernand Dumont, “Quelques réflexions d’ensemble” in *Idéologies au Canada Français : 1850-1900*, Fernand Dumont, Jean-Paul Montmigny and Jean Hamelin, eds. (Québec : Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1971), 5.

³⁹ The Church counted on a growing cadre of clerics to spread its vision and ensure that it was seen as a preeminent force in society. In 1851 Québec had 1 634 clerics, 19 774 in 1911, and 69 940 by 1961. This represents an increase of 3.14% while the population climbed at a rate of 2.05%. Ouellet, *L’Ontario français*, 45.

⁴⁰ Roberto Perin, *Ignace de Montréal : Artisan d’une identité nationale* (Québec : Boréal, 2008), 46.

fight in Canada against liberalism.”⁴¹ For the better part of this period many Church leaders promoted the ultramontane traditional orthodoxy.⁴² Quebec society, as a result of the promotion of a traditional worldview by a preeminent Church, remained in a state of socio-economic backwardness compared to the rest of North America for a majority of the twentieth-century. This phase only ended when Maurice Duplessis’s Union Nationale was swept out of power in 1960. The 1960s witnessed the Quiet Revolution which unleashed a wave of changes to transform and modernise the province.⁴³ The progressive ideals that swept across Quebec at this time ended the period dubbed by some as “la grande noirceur”.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher and Jean-Claude Robert, *Quebec: A History, 1867-1929* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1983), 201.

⁴² Laurent Alie, “L’ultramontanisme au XIXe Siècle. Une idéologie qui se manifeste encore dans le milieu franco-ontarien” *La Revue de l’Université Laurentienne*. Volume 5, no. 4 (1973), 105.

⁴³ Paul André Linteau is typical of a group of social scientists that have taken into question the argument that the Quiet Revolution was a distinct “rupture” with such a backwards past. Linteau is convinced that the modernizing process in the province actually began at the turn of the twentieth-century with the advent of industrialization and urbanization. Paul André Linteau, “Un débat historiographique : l’entrée du Québec dans la modernité et la signification de la Révolution tranquille” in *La Révolution tranquille, 40 ans plus tard : un bilan*. Yves Bélanger, Robert Comeau et Céline Métivier, eds. (Montréal : VLB éditeur, 2000), 33. Changes made by the State in the 1930s and the administration of the Adélard Godbout, Quebec Premier from 1939 to 1944, are in his mind examples of this latent progressivism. Ibid., 24. The author is convinced that what transpired in the Quiet Revolution only occurred because Quebec society had elements of modernity in its recent past. The Quiet Revolution was simply an explosion of this condition. Ibid., 23. For more about the historiographical debate pertaining to the causes and impacts of the Quiet Revolution, see Gérard Bouchard, “L’historiographie du Québec rural et la problématique nord-américaine avant la Révolution tranquille” *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française*. Volume 44, no. 2 (1990), 171-333 and Mathias Boulianne, “Une historiographie de la Révolution tranquille de 1960 à 2000 : Pour une grille de lecture générationnelle” (Mémoire de maîtrise. Sherbrooke : Université de Sherbrooke, 2009).

⁴⁴ E. Martin Meunier and Jean-Philippe Warren contradict the notion that Quiet Revolution was a clear break with the backwards era of the Grande Noirceur. More specifically, they are of the opinion that the former was the end game of a long transformation supported by the “personnaliste” leanings of the Catholic Church seeking “...une sortie religieuse de la religion.” E. Martin Meunier and Jean-Philippe Warren, *Sortir de la Grande Noirceur : l’horizon “personnaliste” de la révolution tranquille* (Sillery : Les éditions Septentrion, 2002), 17. This interpretation begs the view that the Catholic Church was monolithic and unanimously conservative. Ibid., 33. For more on the debate pertaining to conditions during the Grande Noirceur and the Church’s influence leading to the Quiet Revolution, see E. Martin Meunier, “La Grande Noirceur canadienne-française dans l’historiographie et la mémoire québécoises” *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’histoire*. (2016), 43-59 and Paul-Émile Roy, “Les Québécois et leur héritage religieux” *Mens*. Vol. 21 (2001): 17–33 and Michel Gauvreau, *Les origines catholique de la Révolution Tranquille* (Montréal : FIDES, 2008).

Scholars of French Ontario have been much less influenced by Quebec historians writing in the last three decades of the 20th century who provided a different perspective of the ideological underpinnings of Quebec society. These “revisionists”, for instance, questioned the predominance of the Church and clerical elites. In their minds, Quebec society exhibited many progressive traits for several decades before the Quiet Revolution.⁴⁵ What occurred in the 1960s was solely an extension of an existing reality across all sectors of society. For them, Quebec’s development had been relatively “normal”.⁴⁶ The “revisionist” perspective has itself been questioned by a new wave of historians who claim that this interpretation, in an attempt to rehabilitate the image of pre-1960 Quebec society, underestimates the positive aspects of twentieth-century Quebec traditionalism. Supporters of the “nouvelle sensibilité historique” perspective do not however reject all aspects of the “revisionist” perspective. They agree with the “revisionist” argument that modernizing Quebec society, contrary to the perspective promoted by the “modernists”, occurred in advance of the 1960s—as many of the province’s French-speaking people welcomed progressive ideals.⁴⁷ However, the “nouvelle sensibilité historique” does break with the “revisionist” interpretation in two significant ways. First, the former reaffirm the importance of ideas, politics, and religion in Quebec society, which historians from that ilk downplayed. They also believe that the Catholic Church should be recognized as an agent of change that played an integral part in promoting the adoption of

⁴⁵ Damien-Claude Bélanger, “Les historiens révisionnistes et le rejet de la « canadienité » du Québec : réflexions en marge de la Genèse des nations et cultures du Nouveau Monde de Gérard Bouchard” *Mens*, 21 (2001), 107.

⁴⁶ For more on the historiography of Quebec, see Serge Gagnon, *Le passé composé. De Ouellet à Rudin* (Montréal : VLB, 1999), Jean Lamarre, *Le devenir de la nation québécoise selon Maurice Séguin, Guy Frégault et Michel Brunet* (Sillery : Les éditions Septentrion, 1993), Paul-André Linteau, “Un débat historiographique : l’entrée du Québec dans la modernité et la signification de la Révolution tranquille” in *La Révolution tranquille, 40 ans plus tard : un bilan* Yves Bélanger, Robert Comeau et Céline Métivier, eds., (Montréal : VLB, 2000) p. 21-41, and Ronald Rudin, *Making History in Twentieth-Century Quebec* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

⁴⁷ Stéphane Kelly, “Introduction” in *Les idées mènent le Québec*, Stéphane Kelly, editor, (Québec : Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 2003), 4. See also Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher, Jean-Claude Robert, and François Ricard, *Histoire du Québec contemporain : Le Québec depuis 1930* (Montréal : Les éditions Boréal, 1979).

modern ideals in Quebec.⁴⁸ Second, they assert that the march toward a more modern society created some harmful conditions which have hampered contemporary conditions in Quebec. These problems are as troubling as the issues that affected the province prior to the 1960s push to fully modernize Quebec society.⁴⁹ The “nouvelle sensibilité historique” has greatly influenced recent works about Franco-Ontarians and the community’s identity, namely that of Michel Bock⁵⁰, as well as Joseph Yvon Thériault⁵¹, E.-Martin Meunier⁵², and Serge Miville⁵³.

A related issue in this discussion is how the Catholic Church responded to the new socio-economic realities and the increasing influence of “dangerous” ideologies at the turn of the 20th century. Many historians have claimed that the Catholic Church’s conservative and traditional nature undermined its ability to embrace the evolving realities of the early twentieth-century. Some have argued that it resultantly launched a defensive campaign to protect traditional precepts.⁵⁴ In their minds, the Papal Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* authored by Pope Leo XIII in

⁴⁸ Ibid., 4. See also E.-Martin Meunier and Jean-Philippe Warren, *Sortir de la « Grande noirceur »*.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁰ For instance, Michel Bock and E.-Martin Meunier, eds., “Le catholicisme au Canada et les minorités nationales et ethniques: contributions et tensions (XIXe et XXe siècles)” *Études d’histoire religieuse*, (2015 : vol. 80, no 1) 5-13; “De la solidarité canadienne-française à l’écèlement des références: la mutation des identités québécoise et franco-ontarienne” in A. Brassard, L. Côté et J.-F. Savard, eds., *Les relations Québec-Ontario. Un destin partagé ?*, (Québec : Presses de l’Université du Québec, 2011); and *Quand la nation débordait les frontières. Les minorités françaises dans la pensée de Lionel Groulx* (Montréal : Éditions Hurtubise HMH, 2004).

⁵¹ For instance, “Introduction : Entre lieux et mémoire : l’inscription de la francophonie canadienne dans la durée” in A. Gilbert, M. Bock and J.Y. Thériault, eds., *Entre lieux et mémoire : l’inscription de la francophonie canadienne dans la durée*. (Ottawa : Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 2009), 3-18; Cardinal, L., Gilbert, A. and Thériault, J.Y. “Introduction de L’espace francophone en milieu minoritaire au Canada” in J.Y. Thériault, A. Gilbert and L. Cardinal, eds., *L’espace francophone en milieu minoritaire au Canada : nouveaux enjeux, nouvelles mobilisations* (Montréal : Fides, 2008); and J. Y Thériault, “L’institution en Ontario français” *Mens*, VI-1 (2005), 11–21.

⁵² For instance, E.-Martin Meunier and Michel Bock, “Le catholicisme au Canada et les minorités nationales et ethniques : contributions et tensions (XIXe et XXe siècles)” *Études d’histoire religieuse*, Volume vol. 81 (2015): 5-13; Michel Bock and E.-Martin Meunier, “Le catholicisme et les minorités ethniques et nationales : contribution et tensions” *Études d’histoire religieuse*. (2015 : Volume 81, 1-2); and *Le pari personnaliste. Modernité et catholicisme au XXe siècle* (Montréal : Fides, 2007).

⁵³ For instance, Michel Bock and Serge Miville, “Participation et autonomie régionale. L’ACFO et Ottawa face à la critique des régions (1969-1984)” *Francophonies d’Amérique*, n° 34 (2012), 15-40.

⁵⁴ Linteau, Durocher and Robert, *Quebec: A History*, 529.

1891 represents a reactionary call against two ideologies that threatened the Church's predominance in society, socialism and liberalism.⁵⁵ More recent explorations have asserted that, although factions within the Church attempted to counter the new socio-economic realities by imploring its devotees to steadfastly adhere to traditional precepts, others realized that stopping the transition to a primarily industrialized and urbanized reality was unlikely.⁵⁶ Many clerics, it has been argued, were cognizant that the Church had to reconcile itself to the new realities or face being completely marginalized. According to this viewpoint, the Catholic Church, while retaining many conservative benchmarks, embraced some progressive ideals and practices to ensure it would remain relevant in the twentieth-century.⁵⁷ This pragmatic approach was adopted to allow the Church to keep its influential role in a society that was undergoing wholesale socio-economic transformations.⁵⁸

A notable example of how clerical leaders embraced some change to safeguard the Church's predominance is in their coopting of the emerging newsprint medium. They did this at a time when independent commercial publications reporting on notable events and offering a broad range of content replaced the laser-focused ideological organs which had been a mainstay to the end of the nineteenth-century. This latter group was typically "allied with either the Conservative or Reform (Liberal) causes, aiding and abetting the favoured party's stance, and

⁵⁵ Dominique Marquis, *Un quotidien pour l'Église : L'Action catholique, 1910-1940* (Montréal : Leméac Éditeur, 2004), 20.

⁵⁶ Dominique Marquis, "Un quotidien pour l'Église, L'Action catholique 1910-1940" *Études d'histoire religieuse*. 68 (2002), 209.

⁵⁷ Fernande Roy, *Histoire des idéologies au Québec aux XIXe et XX Siècles* (Montréal : Boréal, 1993), 67.

⁵⁸ de Bonville, *La presse Québécoise*, 34. For more on this matters, see E.-Martin Meunier and Jean-Philippe Warren. *Sortir de la « Grande noirceur »* and Paul-André Linteau, "Un débat historiographique : l'entrée du Québec dans la modernité et la signification de la Révolution tranquille" in Yves Bélanger, Robert Comeau et Céline Métivier, eds., *La Révolution tranquille, 40 ans plus tard : un bilan* (Montréal : VLB éditeur, 2000) 21-41.

then benefitting from the patronage of government printing or advertising contracts when the party won power.”⁵⁹ The few religious publications in circulation to the end of the nineteenth-century employed the same strategy as the political broadsheets. Content promoting a particular faith-based ideology dominated over material about newsworthy events and other topics.⁶⁰ This format was largely outdated by the end of the nineteenth-century as social and economic changes paved the way for newspapers to become the first mass media.⁶¹ In brief, the long-used ideological organ approach of the past was replaced by an information press layout that emphasized reporting on news and showcasing diverse content. Sections devoted to sports, leisure activities, fashion and entertainment became mainstays of the new organs. The commercialization of the industry which made selling advertising space the main income generation mechanism for newspapers fueled this new approach.⁶² Commercial journalism was increasingly dedicated to finding ways to increase its readership to attract and retain advertisers.⁶³ While these publications continued to include some ideological content, it diminished as advertisers recognized the appetite readers had for a daily that reported news items and provided a range of interesting material.⁶⁴ The world of commerce and the world of

⁵⁹ Vipond, *The Mass Media*, 7.

⁶⁰ Marquis, *Un quotidien pour l'Église*, 33. Dominique Marquis maintains that there were four types of religious publications at that time: institutional; pious; combat; and information-based newspapers. According to her, in combat organs “...l’opinion prend largement le dessus sur l’information. L’actualité est au service de l’Église” while an information-based catholic newspaper “...ne doit pas se désintéresser des simples nouvelles, mais les diffuser d’une manière contrôlée pour éclairer la vérité et les ramener à un niveau plus représentatif de leur juste valeur dans l’échelle proposée par l’Église.” Marquis, *Un quotidien pour l'Église*, 60 and 77.

⁶¹ This was made possible by the “emergence of industrialization, urbanization, improved means of transportation and communication, the growth of the working class and increased literacy and leisure.” Vipond, *The Mass Media*, 13-14.

⁶² At the end of the nineteenth-century only about one-third of newspaper revenue came from subscriptions and sales. The greater majority of operating costs was covered by advertising. Paul Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 97.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 313.

⁶⁴ de Bonville, *La presse québécoise*, 230.

journalism were now linked as advertising contracts, instead of direct financing from a particular political party or religious movement, provided the support newspapers needed to flourish.⁶⁵

The Catholic Church recognized it was foolhardy to continue to print traditional religious organs in the face of the rising popularity of newspapers. Clerical leaders resultantly co-opted some aspects of the burgeoning format as they believed it could be used to promote Catholic ideals.⁶⁶ Pope Pius X's papal encyclical *E supremi* of 1903 sanctioned the idea of using "Catholic newspapers" to spread the gospel.⁶⁷ He explained that these publications could showcase the ideals of the Church by reporting on chosen news items and offering disparate, as well as entertaining, content from a Catholic perspective. The "bonne presse" approach could therefore be a valuable tool in the Catholic Church's fight to retain its influence at a time when society was experiencing a structural transformation that threatened to displace the conservative ideals of the Church.

Leaders of Canada's French-speaking Catholic Church were very receptive to Pope Pius X's directive. Shortly after the papal encyclical, Louis-Nazaire Bégin, Archbishop of Quebec from 1898 until 1925, circulated a pastoral letter encouraging the "bonne presse" movement in Canada. Within two years the Quebec diocese saw the launch of *L'Action sociale catholique* and *l'Oeuvre de la presse catholique*. These organizations laid the foundation for *L'Action catholique*, which appeared in 1915. The Church, chose to not allow the religious newspaper to

⁶⁵ Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority*, 103.

⁶⁶ Marquis, *Un quotidien pour l'Église*, 42.

⁶⁷ Taillefer, *Le Droit*, 8.

rely on retail sales, subscriptions, and advertising revenue to remain in business. Instead, it would receive regular operating grants along with printing contracts from the Church.⁶⁸ Whenever necessary, the Church also leveraged its influence to replenish *L'Action catholique's* coffers. For instance, priests were routinely implored to advise their parishioners to purchase subscriptions, while Catholic organizations periodically spearheaded “giving campaigns” to raise funds when the newspaper’s accounts ran low.⁶⁹ In return for continually propping up the mouthpiece, the Catholic Church set its editorial approach and decided what, as well as how, news content would appear. *L'Action catholique's* primary editorial and business imperative was meeting the aims of the Church and not those of advertisers. According to Archbishop Bégin, “(l’)esprit catholique doit éclairer toutes les informations transmises dans (ce) journal et son contenu doit refléter la pensée de l’Église sur tous les sujets.”⁷⁰ From its inception, spreading Catholic ideals was the publication’s main priority. Reporting on remarkable events was just a complementary tool because they offered a pretext to defend the Church’s predominance in society against emerging progressive ideals.⁷¹ *L'Action catholique* resultantly promoted a return to the past, or at least, the preservation of the established order.⁷² It was far from being the only Catholic newspaper at the time. Archbishop Bégin’s efforts led to the appearance of fifty other similar organs by 1910. The popularity of Catholic ideological newspapers only swelled, leading to a staggering 149 catholic “bonne presse” organs in print in Quebec in 1937.⁷³ A cursory scan of a few Catholic organs (*Le Patriote de l'Ouest* in Saskatchewan, *La Liberté* in Manitoba, *L'Action catholique* in Quebec City) and independent newspapers (*Le Devoir*, *La Presse*, and *La*

⁶⁸ Marquis, “Un quotidien pour l’Église”, 78.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 77.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 74.

⁷¹ Richard Jones, *L'Idéologie de L'Action catholique* (Québec : Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1974), 1.

⁷² Ibid., 3.

⁷³ Marquis, “Un quotidien pour l’Église”, 47.

Patrie, all from Montreal) from 1913 to 1933 offers an opportunity to compare their approaches, styles, and formats.⁷⁴ For instance, it shows that *Le Patriote de L'Ouest* was a very traditional Catholic information organ with limited variety in what it printed. Although it grew from eight to twelve pages in these two decades, its format and approach remained relatively unchanged. *La Liberté*, which used a very similar approach at the beginning of the period, diversified its content as time passed without increasing its limited press run of about 10 pages. Conversely, *L'Action catholique* presented a wide array of material almost from its launch and continuously changed its design. It also increased its size from six to 22 pages.⁷⁵ Henri Bourassa's *Le Devoir*, meanwhile, was very much an ideological newspaper that offered fairly diversified content including a healthy share of material to entertain readers.⁷⁶ It stayed reasonably true to this style as well as to its relatively limited press run (between 8 and 12 pages) for the entire period. At the opposite end of the spectrum, *La Presse* and *La Patrie* were information-based organs with a mass appeal. These dailies included a mix of material and special content catering to different readers. Both newspapers quadrupled in size from 1913 to 1933—*La Presse* grew from 18 pages to over 80 pages while *La Patrie* went from 12 to 40 pages. Although both were intended for a mass audience and were liberal newspapers in the ideological sense, they used very different approaches and styles. Both provided up-to-date information about events, however *La Patrie* dedicated much more space to sensational news stories and events. As such, many would certainly have been classified it as a “yellow press”.

⁷⁴ The sampling method included tracking content—cover page, material that appeared within the broadsheet, advertising content, and recurring sections—at four month intervals (starting in March) in four year sequences. The scope of the material, as well as the frequency, was also recorded.

⁷⁵ Although the newspaper's format and approach were not static, the counter-revolutionary perspective it presented remained relatively unchanged. Richard Jones, “L'idéologie de L'Action catholique, 1917-1939” *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*. Volume 27, no. 1 (June 1973), 67.

⁷⁶ For more on *Le Devoir* during this period, see Pierre Anctil, *Fais ce que dois : 60 éditoriaux pour comprendre Le Devoir sous Henri Bourassa, 1910-1932* (Sillery : Les éditions Septentrion, 2010).

The previous historiographical explorations of *Le Droit*, Franco-Ontarians, Quebec, the Catholic Church, as well as the “bonne presse” movement, although presented separately, are certainly not mutually exclusive. Some elements found in each of the respective topics are sometimes relevant to the others. The last historiographical topic of importance to this dissertation is rather unique as it is applicable across all of these matters. In fact, interpretations about the importance of clerico-nationalism compared to liberal nationalism within Canada’s French-speaking Catholic community is relatively central to each of those topics. Historian Lucia Ferretti shares a well-worn interpretation that the former emerged as a response to the threat of the British Conquest and the liberal/nationalist movement of the 1830s in Upper and Lower Canada.⁷⁷ Michel Bock similarly claims that the failed Rebellions of 1837 and 1838, followed by the Act of Union that created the United Province of Canada, gave the Church an opening to encourage a defensive brand of French Canadian nationalism nested in conservatism and traditional ideals.⁷⁸ According to him, clerical authorities promoted a national vision “non pas en termes de rupture avec le passé mais plutôt en termes de préservation et de respect de la tradition.”⁷⁹ Remaining true to their traditional roots, clerico-nationalists argued, was the only way to ensure the survival of the French-Canadian nation. Researchers agree that Bishop Ignace Bourget was one of the initial architects of the movement linking the survival of French Canadians to their adherence to the traditional, unchanging precepts endorsed by the Catholic

⁷⁷ Ferretti, *Brève histoire*, 33. For more on the rise and impact of clerico-nationalism, see Fernand Dumont, Jean-Paul Montminy and Jean Hamelin, eds., *Idéologies au Canada Français : 1850-1900* (Québec : Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1971); Kenneth McRoberts and Dale Postgate, *Développement et modernisation du Québec* (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1983); Fernande Roy, *Histoire des idéologies au Québec*; and Fernand Ouellet, *L’Ontario français dans le Canada français avant 1911*.

⁷⁸ Michel Bock, “Se souvenir et oublier : la mémoire du Canada français, hier et aujourd’hui” in Joseph Yvon Thériault, Anne Gilbert and Linda Cardinal, eds., *L’espace francophone en milieu minoritaire : nouveaux enjeux, nouvelles mobilisations* (Montréal : Fides éditions, 2008), 175.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

Church.⁸⁰ This new vision resultantly saw the Church take on more responsibility for temporal matters.⁸¹ According to Bock, it quickly took a stranglehold over temporal matters as early as the 1860s by “clericalizing” the provision of health, welfare, and education services.⁸² Mathias Bouliane notes in his critical analysis of the historiography of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution how the influential cleric Lionel Groulx used *L’Action catholique* to spread clerico-nationalism throughout the first half of the twentieth-century.⁸³ Ferretti argues that this campaign was very successful as “(d)e la Première Guerre mondiale jusqu’à la Révolution tranquille, l’Église se déploie pleinement comme organisatrice principale de la société québécoise.”⁸⁴ Clerico-nationalism’s devotion to traditional, anti-modern ideals was certainly an integral part of the way French Canadians viewed themselves from the second half of the nineteenth-century to just past the middle of the twentieth-century. Many were convinced that it was the most effective safeguard against cultural assimilation into the nation’s majority English-speaking Protestant group that embraced the trappings of twentieth-century modernity.

Although clerico-nationalism was a pervasive element of French Canadian identity for over a century, many have argued that it was not universally adopted. Fernande Roy, for one, challenges the perspective that all French Canadians were unbending clerico-nationalists. The historian claims that, in fact, many adhered to liberal ideas that welcomed the socio-economic

⁸⁰ Bock, “Se souvenir et oublier”, 166.

⁸¹ Ferretti, *Brève histoire*, 7.

⁸² Bock, “De la solidarité canadienne-française”, 90.

⁸³ Mathias Boulianne, “Une historiographie de la Révolution tranquille de 1960 à 2000 : Pour une grille de lecture générationnelle” (Mémoire de maîtrise. Université de Sherbrooke, 2009), 46.

⁸⁴ Ferretti, *Brève histoire*, 113.

transformations of the era.⁸⁵ According to her, the liberal strain did not end with the Rebellions of 1837 and 1838 but was supported by a small but vocal minority from the bourgeoisie who approved of its values—liberty, individualism, equality, and progress.⁸⁶ Michel Bock agrees with Roy that liberalism, although marginalized by the tumultuous events of the 1830s, was not erased.⁸⁷ Raymond Lemieux and Jean-Paul Montminy explain in their survey of the penetration of catholicism in Quebec society in the twentieth-century that the particular brand of liberalism that emerged “...a des préoccupation plutôt d’ordre économique. Son langage est celui du capital : esprit d’entreprise, développement, concurrence, productivité, enrichissement...qui investira le terrain politique, dans la mesure où l’obtention de responsabilités gouvernementales semblera à ses leaders une condition nécessaire à l’épanouissement de leurs entreprises.”⁸⁸ While clerico-nationalism was based on the premise that collective values would improve the French Canadian community, the liberal nationalist ethos claimed that individual progress would ultimately serve the group better.⁸⁹ Several of the era’s newspapers, including *La Presse*, *La Patrie*, and *Le Soleil*, promoted the competing liberal nationalist ideal.⁹⁰ According to Ferretti support for liberal nationalism even spread outside of lay society. “Une partie important des curés, à l’instar de Mgr (Jean-Jacques) Lartigue”, she claims, “partagent le nationalisme des libéraux.”⁹¹ Although clerico-nationalism seemingly had more followers, the impact of the liberal nationalist perspective should not be undersold.

⁸⁵ Roy, *Histoire des idéologies*, 110-11. A few sources on the role of liberal nationalism include Gilles Bourque, Jules Duchastel et Jacques Beauchemin, *La société libérale duplessiste* (Montréal : Presse de l’Université Montréal, 1994) and Michel Gauvreau, *Les origines catholique de la Révolution Tranquille* (Montreal : FIDES, 2008).

⁸⁶ Fernande Roy, *Progrès, harmonie, liberté : Le libéralisme des milieux d’affaires francophones à Montréal au tournant du siècle* (Montréal : Boréal, 1988), 301.

⁸⁷ Bock, “Se souvenir et oublier”, 166.

⁸⁸ Jean-Paul Montminy and Raymond Lemieux, *Le catholicisme québécois* (Québec : Presses de l’Université Laval, 2000), 21.

⁸⁹ Linteau, “Un débat historiographique”, 33.

⁹⁰ Ferretti, *Brève histoire*, 48.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

The beginning of this chapter presented a quick overview of the events that prompted the leaders of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority to publish a dual-purpose *journal de combat*. As outlined, *Le Droit* was launched to stop the provincial government from enacting Regulation 17. Its overseers also saw their broadsheet as a tool to spread social Catholicism as society was experiencing significant socio-economic transformations. Financial pressures, it was mentioned, forced the organ to bring its content in line with the diversity found in modern newspapers. Moreover, it was noted that the organ added an increasing amount of editorial content for readers in Quebec to grow its readership. The newspaper was meanwhile changing its approach to defending Franco-Ontarian rights. From the mid-1910s it increasingly employed a proactive strategy instead of a responsive defensive approach. It consequently published pieces with positions that were quite progressive for a "bonne presse" organ under the control of clerical leaders.

This overview of the newspapers stunning twenty-year long transformation certainly calls into question many of the historiographical interpretations about *Le Droit*, the characteristics and ideals of the Franco-Ontarian community, features of Quebec's French-speaking population, and the character of Catholic clerics. First, the evidence seems to show that *Le Droit* was not a steadfast *journal de combat* geared solely for Franco-Ontarian readers. Diversifying its content and reaching out to readers in Quebec significantly undercuts this long-held interpretation. Second, the adoption of a proactive survival strategy meant that, contrary to staying true to its intention to act as a "bonne presse", the newspaper published positions contradicting the social Catholicism tenets it had supposedly been launched to spread. This dissenting material calls into question the innate conservatism and static nature of the Franco-Ontarian community's lay and

clerical leadership advanced by previous writers. Furthermore, the sum total of the changes that occurred at *Le Droit* begs the interpretation that French-speaking Canadians, out of a fear of assimilation, were consumed by conservative and traditional ideals while being weary of accepting the shifting conditions of the early twentieth-century. What we see, instead, are leaders who were willing to adapt their way of doing things as conditions changed and circumstances warranted. Many of the modifications that *Le Droit* experienced and, for that matter, the shifting strategies it adopted, reflected the unique conditions of the Franco-Ontarian community. These circumstances speak to the specificity of experience within the French Canadian population resulting from different socio-economic, demographic, and political realities. Lastly, deciding to transform the newspaper and adopt new strategies, although reflecting the pragmatic nature of *Le Droit's* handlers, certainly demonstrates an openness to change as well as adopting approaches linked to modern ideals. This realization is especially important as clerics were at the helm of the newspaper when these events were occurring. Their part in the decisions that changed *Le Droit* begs the interpretation that all members of the Catholic Church rejected the wholesale socio-economic transformation they faced in the early twentieth-century. What emerges, instead, is a picture in-line with the historiographical interpretation that takes exception with the argument that the Church used its powers against change and modernity. Although it was not a leading proponent of the new socio-economic conditions and the rapid rate of change, it seemingly welcomed some elements when it suited its purpose and aims. It would appear that context, less than dogmatic beliefs, influenced clerics and those who followed the Catholic Church.

Sources

As mentioned at the outset, *Le Droit*'s editorials and archival materials related to its operations were explored to shine a light on the ideas of the Franco-Ontarian leadership at the beginning of the twentieth-century. It is important to note that this is the first time that *Le Droit* has been used for this purpose. As the historiographical section explained, previous studies looking into its initial few decades only used the organ to glorify how the Ontario minority defeated Regulation 17. The newspaper has therefore only ever been explored for commemorative purposes.⁹² This dissertation employs a content analysis to uncover the ideas of Ontario's minority leaders as presented by the organ. Analysing the relevant archival materials served to uncover how contextual factors influenced *Le Droit*'s strategies and approaches.

The period under study encompasses the events leading to the founding of the daily and the twenty years when the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate controlled *Le Droit*'s content, format and scope via the position of Directeur de censure (hereafter "Censorship Director"). As Chapter One will outline, the missionary order provided much needed resources—financial and personnel—to launch the publication and to keep it in business during its initial years. The Oblates in turn censored what was published in the newspaper by having one of their own assume the position of Censorship Director to 1933. Father Charles Charlebois held the position from 1916 to 1930, followed by Father Gabriel Sarrazin to early 1933. The Oblates informed those at *Le Droit* at that point that Sarrazin would be vacating the position and that they

⁹² Serge Miville has recently published an article which relies on *Le Droit*'s editorial and special essays to gage the reaction to 1967's États généraux du Canada français. See "Le grand « schisme » ? : La « première mémoire » des États généraux et la presse francophone au Canada" in Jean-François Laniel and Joseph Yvon Thériault, eds. *Retour sur les États généraux du Canada français* (Montréal : Presse de l'Université Laval, 2016), 59-84.

would not be providing a replacement.⁹³ The position of Censorship Director was henceforward held by a lay person. Although the Oblates continued to have a financial stake in the newspaper until 1979, *Le Droit* gained more and more independence from clerical influence beginning with Sarrazin's departure.⁹⁴ Deciding to remove themselves from overseeing what appeared in *Le Droit* ended the Oblates direct involvement in the newspapers day-to-day operations.

The research process included mining three types of material which has not be done by other explorations about the newspaper's early years: First, many of the findings in this dissertation were surfaced by completing a unique quantitative and qualitative analysis of *Le Droit*'s editorial content from 1913 to 1933. During this era, aside from the fact the Oblates controlled its content, the newspaper grappled with the issue of how it could demonstrate its relevancy to readers and advertisers while remaining true to its intended dual mission of being a combat newspaper devoted to promoting Catholic ideals. The investigative approach identifies the topics, positions and related arguments presented in over 10 700 editorials printed during these two decades.

An examination of several private archival sources, as well as public material, was also undertaken to frame what content appeared in the organ. It includes the personal correspondence

⁹³ The Oblates informed Esdras Terrien via letter that "(il) est impossible de vous accorder un père qui puisse remplir la position laissée vacante par le départ du père Sarrazin... (le) changement opéré ne doit pas vous faire perdre courage et être pris comme une preuve de désintéressement à l'œuvre de la part de Oblats. Nous avons confiance que messieurs les directeurs, par la prudence et leur dévouement à l'œuvre, voudront bien continuer leur travail difficile et assurer la survivance du journal." Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-6 Journal Le Droit: Correspondances, document, rapports, etc. 1922-1946. Lettre des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée à Esdras Terrien, 23/07/1933.

⁹⁴ Laurent Tremblay, *Entre deux livraisons : 1913-1963* (Ottawa : *Le Droit*, 1963), 147.

of Fathers Charles Charlebois and Gabriel Sarrazin, available at the Archives Deschâtelets.⁹⁵ The former was born in 1871 in Sainte-Marguerite du Lac-Masson, Quebec. He was ordained in Ottawa in 1895 and, following various positions in the Ottawa Valley, he was the founding pastor of the Sainte-Famille of Ottawa parish in 1901. Charlebois ministered in this parish until joining *Le Droit* in 1913 where he worked until 1930. In 1934 he was assigned to oversee a teaching institution in Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts.⁹⁶ Gabriel Sarrazin was born in 1899 in Saint-Didace, Quebec. He was ordained in Ottawa in 1926 and ministered in Hull and Saint-Sauveur parishes in Quebec before entering the field of journalism in 1929 at *Le Droit* where he worked until 1933. At that point he took a similar position at *La Voix Du Clocher* (Montreal). He then worked at *L'Étincelle du Sacré-Coeur* (Saint-Sauveur de Québec) for a decade followed by eight years at *Ma Gaspésie* (New Richmond).⁹⁷

The archival holdings at the Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française were also mined for the personal correspondence of the daily's ten most prominent editorialists from 1913 to 1933.⁹⁸ The length of their respective tenure at the newspaper, as well as their comparatively prolific contributions to its editorial pages, are indications these men espoused viewpoints in line with those who led *Le Droit*. (See Appendix A: *Le Droit's* Most Prominent Editorialists—1913 to 1933). These 10 editorialists include: J. Albert Foisy, who joined *Le Droit*

⁹⁵ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois (HEB 2477.C47L).

⁹⁶ Gaston Carrière, *Dictionnaire biographique des Oblats de Marie-Immaculée au Canada : Tome I* (Ottawa : Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1976), 185.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁹⁸ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario: Fonds Association canadienne-française de l'éducation de l'Ontario (C2); Fonds Edgars-Tissot (P237); Fonds Georges-Michaud (P62); Fonds Gustave-Lacasse (P37); Fonds Henri-Lessard (P52); Fonds Le Droit (C71); Fonds Napoléon-Antoine-Belcourt (P133); Fonds Marie-Rose-Turcot (P22); Fonds Ordre-de-Jacques-Cartier (C3); and Fonds Séraphin-Marion (P106).

in 1916 and left in 1924⁹⁹; Charles Gautier who was hired at *Le Droit* a few weeks after it appeared in 1913 and stayed on for over three decades in various positions¹⁰⁰; Thomas Poulin who was at the organ from its beginning, and was Head Editorialist until leaving in 1924 to join *L'Action catholique*¹⁰¹; Fulgence Charpentier who worked at *Le Droit* as an editorialist in 1919 and as Parliamentary Correspondent from 1922 to 1925¹⁰²; J. Edmond Cloutier, who joined *Le Droit* in 1919 and was an editorialist and journalist for nearly a decade before becoming the organ's General Manager in 1932, and then leaving the newspaper in 1940¹⁰³; Harry Bernard, who was an editorialist at *Le Droit* from 1919 to 1923¹⁰⁴; Henri Lessard, who was editorialist at *Le Droit* from 1922 until retiring in 1950¹⁰⁵; Charles Michaud, who penned editorials at *Le Droit* from January, 1925 to May, 1930¹⁰⁶; Camille L'Heureux, who joined *Le Droit*'s editorial team in 1928, and held this position for five years followed by various roles—Reporter, Head Editorialist and Content Director—until he retired in 1963¹⁰⁷; and, lastly, Léopold Richer, who began his journalism career by joining *Le Droit* in 1930 where he remained until 1936.¹⁰⁸

⁹⁹ Foisy had helped launch *L'Action catholique* before working at *Le Droit*. He left in 1924 to oversee *La Sentinelle* in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. Charles Dufresne, *Dictionnaire de l'Amérique Française : francophonie nord-américaine hors Québec* (Ottawa : Le Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1988), 152.

¹⁰⁰ His long career at the newspaper culminated in Gautier eventually overseeing the editorial department. Noël Lanoix, *Les biographies françaises d'Amérique* (Montréal : Journalistes associés, 1942), 617.

¹⁰¹ Tremblay, *Entre deux livraisons*, 114.

¹⁰² Charpentier left the organ for similar work at Montreal's *La Presse* and *Le Canada* (both in Montreal) as well as Quebec City's *Le Soleil*. He served on the Ottawa Board of Control in the mid-1930s and then held various positions in the French section of the Canadian Censorship Branch during WWII. He returned to *Le Droit* in 1968 as Assistant Head Editorialist. He held this position for close to five years and continued working at the newspaper until 1999. Dufresne, *Dictionnaire de l'Amérique Française*, 82.

¹⁰³ Cloutier was a key leader of the Franco-Ontarian community as he was also Secretary Treasurer of the Commission des écoles séparées d'Ottawa and later Secretary of the Association canadienne-française d'éducation d'Ontario. Lanoix, *Les biographies françaises d'Amérique*, 93.

¹⁰⁴ Bernard left *Le Droit* to become Director at the *Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*. Dufresne, *Dictionnaire de l'Amérique Française*, 49.

¹⁰⁵ Lessard began his career in journalism in 1921 at *Le Semeur* and *L'Action française* (Montreal) Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Archival Holdings, P52.

¹⁰⁶ No biographical information available.

¹⁰⁷ Dufresne, *Dictionnaire de l'Amérique Française*, 223.

¹⁰⁸ He moved to Montreal's *Le Devoir* as Parliamentary Correspondent and then became Director at *Le Bloc* followed by the same position at *Notre Temps*. Ibid., 311-312.

Administrative documents of the Association canadienne-française d'éducation de l'Ontario (ACFÉO), the Syndicat d'œuvres sociales limitée, and *Le Droit*, held at the Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, were likewise explored.¹⁰⁹ The latter includes various correspondence outlining the reasons for launching the organ as well as its founding mission, scope, format, and approach. Administrative meeting minutes were also probed. These minutes include those from weekly Executive Meetings, quarterly updates, and yearly shareholder review gatherings. They provide information about the opinions and ideological underpinnings of those who controlled *Le Droit*, as well as some of the factors that prompted transforming the publication's scope, format, and approach.

Public material was likewise scrutinized, including the pre-emptive pamphlet the Syndicat d'œuvres sociales limitée circulated in 1912 to prospective subscribers of its planned newspaper. Content in the newspaper's inaugural edition outlining its publicly stated aims, vision and scope was also mined. An analysis of the subsequent yearly "anniversary edition" editorials reiterating *Le Droit's* original goals, recent accomplishments, and intentions for the coming year were likewise used to chart how the organ presented itself to its readers from 1914 to 1933.

¹⁰⁹ This content is located in Fonds Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (C2) and Fonds *Le Droit* (C71).

Methodology

Researchers have conducted countless explorations of newspapers to reveal the ideas of those behind the organs, and what the key messages were that they sought to convey.¹¹⁰ A content analysis of newspapers can employ a quantitative analytical approach. In this case, information from subjective content—i.e. editorials, opposite the editorial page (a.k.a. op. eds), articles, and news bulletins—is classified thematically by topic categories, positions aired, or arguments used to support a point of view.¹¹¹ This coding allows investigators to use statistical analysis to identify tendencies, trends, or notable pattern breaks in the content. This is a useful strategy as it “forces an analytically rigorous method of researching (subjective) material”.¹¹² A qualitative approach is also very valuable when analyzing a newspaper as it allows researchers to reveal the publication’s positions on various topics or events as well as the arguments it commonly used in airing its case.¹¹³ My content analysis is dedicated to *Le Droit*’s editorial essays from 1913 to 1933. I am the first researcher to use both investigative methods: quantitative and qualitative.

The first part of this unique and extensive content analysis of *Le Droit* includes a quantitative review of the 10 788 editorials from 1913 to 1933.¹¹⁴ The organ usually printed

¹¹⁰ According to Bernard Berelson, a renowned behavioural scientist known for exploring how to undertake research with mass media, a content analysis is a research technique which serves to surface an objective description, undertaken in a systematic and quantitative manner of communications material. Jean de Bonville, *L’analyse de contenu des médias. De la problématique au traitement statistique* (Buxelles : Éditions De Boeck Université, 2007), 9.

¹¹¹ For a detailed overview of media content analysis practices, see Jean de Bonville’s *L’analyse de contenu des médias*.

¹¹² Valerie Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 17.

¹¹³ Jones, *L’Idéologie de l’Action catholique*, 13.

¹¹⁴ Editorial content not coded or explored qualitatively during this period include: Essays reproduced from another newspaper (signed and unsigned); serials (for instance, Tribune Parlementaire, Tribune Ouvrière, Chronique Parlementaire...); signed editorial pieces using a pseudonym after May 1st, 1916, when signed editorials became the

between two and five editorials per day which ranged from 150 to 300 words each.¹¹⁵ The material contains unsigned editorial essays before 1916, and signed editorial essays after 1916 when providing the authors' name became common practice at the organ. In all, 74 contributors signed their names to pieces that appeared in the editorial sections over these two decades. The quantitative analytical process included classifying editorials by overall themes—labelled “General Topics”—as well as more precise subjects within these wide-ranging groups—labelled “Subheadings”. (See Appendix B: Thematic Index of General Topics with Related Subheadings)

A two-step process was used in identifying the thematic groupings: First, editorials were separated according to broad topics about similar issues.¹¹⁶ This was seen as the principal topic of the editorial. These thematic classifications are the twelve General Topics. Once the material was clustered into overall themes, a second reading of the 10 788 editorials was undertaken to further disaggregate them within their General Topics into specific subsets. This precise content was assigned a Subheading classification. There are 72 Subheadings. It is important to note that editorials that focused on more than one topic complicated the classification process. For instance, an editorial could ask political officials to institute a policy banning women from paid labour, as their incursion into the wage economy challenged their natural role as caregivers in the household. This piece might warrant being classified in either the General Topic Policies or the General Topic Family.¹¹⁷ In these cases, the piece was assigned to the category that represented a greater proportion of material in the editorial. For instance, if an editorial on gender issues spent the greater majority of ink on the matter of acceptable work for women but also devoted a

norm; unsigned opinion pieces after May 1st, 1916 ; and Au Jour le Jour—brief subjective paragraphs accompanied by the authors' initials.

¹¹⁵ *Le Droit*'s editorials appeared on the front page until 1916 when they were moved to the second page. The opinion pieces were relocated to the third page a few years later. A second set of editorials catering to readers in Quebec began to appear on the fourth page in 1922.

¹¹⁶ de Bonville, 146.

¹¹⁷ Untangling the challenge of categorizing content that is not mutually exclusive is possible if the researcher adopts, and sticks to, well-defined and clear classification rules.

bit of space to reproductive issues, it was classified in the General Topic Family followed by the Subheading Gender Roles. A granular statistical examination of content within each General Topic category was completed. This served to reveal thematic preferences within the respective General Topic categories. This two-part statistical examination presents a comparative overview of the topics showcased in *Le Droit's* editorial sections. This approach allowed for the identification of patterns of exposure by tracking comparative frequency and changes from 1913 to 1933.

The analysis of the newspaper's editorial material also included a qualitative component. Only content from frequent editorialists—those who submitted at least five opinion pieces within a year—were examined qualitatively because their enduring tenure most likely represented the vision of those who controlled the newspaper. Special consideration has been granted to contributors who, although not meeting the previous criterion, had a unique connection with the publication. For instance, Pierre Esdras Terrien's infrequent editorial submissions have been included because he was President of the Syndicat d'oeuvres sociales limitée from 1921 to 1931. The qualitative review presents the viewpoints and arguments that the newspaper espoused in 53 out of 72 Subheadings. In analysing what was collected according to the twelve overall themes, it is apparent that two definite groupings existed. First, a collection delving into personal lifestyle choices and community-related matters. This group includes General Topics Economy & Business, Education, Family, Labour Relation, and Values & Ideals. The second group pertains to politically-related and event-specific content including the General Topics Canadian Identity, Great Depression, Politics, Public Policies, and World War One. The breath of content meant that a choice had to be made to keep the dissertation manageable. It was decided to focus on the

previous cluster of General Topics as they are most likely to delve into matters relevant to building a wholesome and prosperous society. This was certainly a primary concern for Franco-Ontarian lay and clerical officials witnessing the significant socio-economic changes of the early twentieth-century. This transformation certainly purported to have weighty impressions on the Franco-Ontarian community including avoiding assimilation. It must be noted that, in some cases, subheadings with fewer than 50 editorials were only mentioned in the quantitative overview. Likewise, arguments presented in fewer than 40 editorials in a Subheading were omitted from the qualitative review. Exceptions were made when content was linked to the survival of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority. The qualitative review process, it is important to mention, served to highlight instances when *Le Droit* tied its opinions to the protection of the Franco-Ontarian minority.

Chapters

Chapter One opens with an exploration of the events that led the Société d'oeuvres sociales limitée to publish *Le Droit*, as well as the organ's intended aims as mentioned in its pre-launch missive and inaugural edition. It then includes an analysis of the "anniversary editions" and special editorials printed between 1914 and 1933. This content served to reiterate *Le Droit*'s mission, scope, and aims to its readers. It also mentioned notable outcomes the organ believed it had influenced. The review of this material will show that the newspaper paid decreasingly less attention to its founding aims of acting as an Ontario-centric organ to fight for school language rights and promote social Catholicism. Private archival materials are then presented to reveal how financial pressures underscored the management's decision to slowly drop its outdated religious organ format for that of a commercially-driven newspaper. It will be shown that

financial pressures were likewise behind the decision to abandon the publication's Ontario-centric scope by offering an increasing proportion of content tailored to readers in Quebec. Chapter One also includes a statistical comparison of coded editorial content by General Topics. This analysis shows how the publication had, by 1920, largely been transformed from a traditional nineteenth-century ideological organ closer to that of a mainstream "bonne presse" offering some of the features of commercial newspapers. In brief, readers were decreasingly subjected to editorials from the General Topic Religion and Language compared to the other General Topics. They also saw the introduction of material about topics that would be relevant mostly to French-speaking readers in Quebec. These strategies served to increase the newspaper's readership and, consequently, garner more advertising revenue. It likewise reflected *Le Droit's* decision to expand its approach to protecting Franco-Ontarian rights by placing more emphasis on measures that would build the population's resiliency. Lastly, private archival materials show how *Le Droit* was increasingly committed to interfering, both behind the scenes and publicly, in the electoral arena. The newspaper's leadership abandoned its non-interference strategy because it recognized having a hand in politics would better allow it to protect the rights of the province's French-speaking Catholic minority.

Chapters Two to Five provide a quantitative and qualitative analysis of editorials. The former shows how frequently specific themes appeared in the daily over the period. This assessment identifies patterns of exposure, including comparative point-in-time frequency, as well as changes over the 1913-1933 period. The statistical review serves to underline *Le Droit's* content preferences, while the qualitative analysis identifies the opinions aired on various issues and some of the factors that underscored these views. The four chapters are organized

thematically: Chapter Two is dedicated to material in the General Topic Values & Ideals. Many of these editorials focused on the importance of morality and encouraging respectable behaviour (i.e., choosing virtuous leisure activities and forgoing inappropriate reading materials). The General Topic also included pieces advocating using a budget and managing expenses wisely. The chapter closes by examining editorial content about measures to limit alcohol consumption including voluntary temperance and state-imposed prohibition. Chapter Three includes an exploration of the General Topics Education and Family. Material in the former centres on promoting the advantages of gaining a primary school and university education. It likewise includes a collection of editorials encouraging readers to participate in lifelong learning opportunities. A significant share of the latter focuses on what those at *Le Droit* considered appropriate gender roles based on separate spheres of influence. A smaller proportion of content in this General Topic details the organ's opposition to divorce, and the promotion of large families. Chapter Four focuses on the General Topic Economy & Business, which includes the advantages of farming and living in rural settings. It also contains editorials encouraging readers to participate in paid labour or becoming businessmen. The last segment of this chapter includes *Le Droit's* campaign in favour of cooperatives. Chapter Five is dedicated to the General Topic Labour Relations which contains material explaining that workers have the right to join labour groups, the advantages of faith-based unions over international neutral labour organizations, and the dangers of socialism and communism.

The conclusion provides observations about what has been learned from this detailed examination. It ties together the factors that prompted *Le Droit* to evolve from a battle organ,

promoting a social ideal, to a mainstream newspaper. Lastly, it frames potential lines of inquiry other historians may want to examine using *Le Droit*'s rich editorial material.

CHAPTER TWO

Le Droit in print—a measured transformation

In the Introduction, it is mentioned that the Ontario government’s tabling of Regulation 17 sparked a movement that led to the publication of a battle organ to fight the implementation of this policy. However, several factors influenced the type of newspaper that was introduced as a part of the campaign to stop the ruling Conservatives from eroding French-language schooling rights. The limited financial means of the Ontario’s French-speaking population, along with the primacy the Catholic Church played in the Franco-Ontarian community, set the stage for the type of broadsheet created to counter Regulation 17. Ultimately what materialized was a battle organ partly dedicated to spreading social Catholicism following the “bonne presse” model. A pre-launch missive circulated a few months before it appeared as well as *Le Droit*’s inaugural edition presented the newspaper’s five-point strategic plan. In this chapter, it will be shown how *Le Droit*’s anniversary edition editorials, and a number of editorials (hereafter called “special editorials”) from 1914 to 1933 revisited the newspaper’s founding edicts. While some of the five core themes mentioned in 1913 were repeated in this material, a number were overlooked. Meanwhile, other goals were talked about in this content which had not been part of the launch material. This chapter will then showcase evidence from *Le Droit*’s archives which explains why it strayed from its initial design, approach, and scope. In short, business imperatives forced it to abandon some of its original intentions while increasingly diversifying its content. Financial reasons also caused the organ to expand its target audience outside of Ontario. Lastly, this chapter will show how this transformation influenced the organ’s editorial pages. A quantitative content analysis will demonstrate that *Le Droit* slowly paid decreasing attention to its core

mandate of fighting for French-language schooling rights as well as promoting social Catholicism. By the early 1930s, its editorial material was overwhelmingly dedicated to other topics, while opinion pieces regarding religion and language issues, represented a small minority. Content from the newspaper's archives also reveals that those who controlled *Le Droit* did not refrain from playing a role in political affairs, which is contrary to what they had originally promised. According to this material, those at the Syndicat and *Le Droit* used their influence, as well as the organ's leverage, to directly impact provincial and federal electoral politics. Acting in this manner, even though it contradicted one of *Le Droit*'s founding precepts, was warranted as it promised to go a long way in protecting the rights of Ontario's French-speaking population.

A newspaper to fight for Franco-Ontarians rights

The political events that spurred Ontario's French-speaking community to launch a campaign to defend their linguistic rights emerged at a time when intolerance against Catholics and French-speaking had been growing for some time.¹ The matter came to a head in Ontario as a result of a commission launched in 1910 by Conservative Party Premier James P. Whitney to evaluate Ontario's bilingual school system. Doctor F.W. Merchant, who headed the investigation, tabled its findings and recommendations in the Legislative Assembly in 1912.² His report argued that the province's bilingual schools were not meeting Ontario's teaching standards.³ It also noted that French-language students were doing extremely poorly at mastering

¹ For more information about the growing enmity towards the province's Catholics and French-speaking people, see Michel Bock and Francois Charbonneau, *Le siècle du Règlement 17 : Regards sur une crise scolaire et nationale* (Ottawa : Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2015).

² Robert Choquette, *Langue et Religion : Histoire des conflits Anglo-Français de l'Ontario* (Ottawa : Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1977), 171. Peter Oliver's "Regulation 17: The Resolution of the Ontario Bilingual Schools Crisis, 1916-1927" offers a detailed account of the factors which led the Whitney government to table Regulation 17 as well as the events that later led it to be withdrawn. See Peter Oliver, *Public and Private Persons: The Ontario Political Culture, 1914-1934* (Toronto: Clarke-Irwin & Company Limited, 1975), 92-124.

³ Simon, *Le Règlement XVII*, 8-9.

English. Premier Whitney introduced Regulation 17 one year later in the hopes of addressing some of the shortcomings identified in the Merchant Commission report. The government argued that this broad-spectrum intervention would increase learning outcomes across the province, raise teacher competencies, and promote learning of the English language by the province's French-language minority. The latter would be accomplished by gradually eliminating teaching French in Ontario schools within the decade.⁴

It is important to note that the province's French-speaking population had already begun to mobilize to protect its linguistic rights some time before Premier Whitney launched the Merchant Commission. In fact, in 1910 French-speaking lay and clerical leaders had met in Ottawa to discuss preemptive ways to safeguard the language rights of the province's French-speaking Catholic population. This occurred as opposition to minority linguistic rights was gaining momentum in other parts of Canada and Ontario.⁵ The delegates at the gathering agreed on three courses of action: First, a province-wide organization was needed to bring people together in a concerted campaign to retain their minority language rights. Second, policy recommendations must be forwarded to provincial officials specifically pertaining to French-language schooling. Last, a newspaper should be launched to marshal the province's French-

⁴ Ibid., 36.

⁵ This pre-emptive move was influenced by several anti-French language campaigns which emerged in other predominately English-speaking provinces around the turn of the century. In brief, the Manitoba government repealed the province's bilingual status in 1890 which ultimately ended the teaching of French in that province's schools. The North-West Territories passed similar legislation in 1892 making it an English-only territory. The move towards provincial unilingualism in Canada continued in 1905 as English was recognized as the only official language of the newly founded provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Choquette, *Langue et Religion*, 214. For a detailed account of this topic, see Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French-language Controversy in Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987).

speaking population against the government's efforts to erode their schooling language rights.⁶ Although Ontario already had a few French-language broadsheets, all had a limited reach because they were intended for local audiences. These organs also typically promoted a general French-Canadian perspective.⁷ What the delegates envisioned was a pan-provincial battle newspaper with a distinctively Franco-Ontarian outlook. They were convinced this type of organ would embolden the province's French-speaking Catholic population to fight to preserve their minority rights.

The convention's organizers quickly moved to institute the recommendations adopted in Ottawa. L'Association canadienne-française d'éducation d'Ontario (ACFÉO) was founded within a few months, followed by the Syndicat d'oeuvres sociales limitée three years later. The release of the Merchant Commission recommendations prompted the latter. The Syndicat was tasked with launching a combat organ to fight for the minority's language and religious rights.⁸ They struck a seven-member committee with clerical and lay leaders to hash out an operating plan.⁹ Financial considerations were a significant obstacle as few French-speaking Catholics in Ontario had the capital to bankroll a province-wide daily. The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate stepped in by offering to provide seed funding for the organ. This Catholic order had a strong presence in the Ottawa Valley since the mid-nineteenth century. Eugene de Mazenod had founded the order in Marseille at the beginning of the nineteenth-century. The Church elevated it to the status of 'congregation' shortly thereafter. The Oblates established its first

⁶ Simon, *Le Règlement XVII*, 10. For a detailed account of this issue, see René Dionne, "1910. Une première prise de parole collective en Ontario français" (*Cahier Charlevois*, Sudbury : Société Charlevois et Prise de Parole. 1995), 15-124.

⁷ Examples of these organs included: *Le Courrier d'Ottawa*, *Le Courrier d'Essex* and *Le Courrier d'Outaouais*.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁹ Laurence, "*Le Oblats et le journal Le Droit*", 130.

missions in Canada in 1841 and moved into the Ottawa Valley soon after. The Oblate Joseph-Eugène-Bruno Guigues became the first Bishop of the newly created Bytown diocese in 1847.¹⁰ The Oblates, aside from providing start-up capital for the daily, also donated office space in one of their buildings, and seconded Father Charles Charlebois to plan the launch.¹¹ Having direct clerical involvement in this venture ensured that the new organ would meet the “bonne presse” standards the Church expected.¹²

With financing in place, the Syndicat circulated a two-page prospectus in January 1913 to Franco-Ontarian leaders outlining its aspirations for the coming months. The pamphlet included a header from Pope Pius X noting that it was imperative to use contemporary tools to confront attacks on the Catholic way of life.¹³ The document explained that the Syndicat had been formed to respond to the increasing need to support the common causes of the province’s French-speaking Catholic community. According to the prospectus, the organization promised to work tirelessly to protect the rights and interests of the province’s French-speaking Catholic minority.¹⁴ The Syndicat’s efforts, it was mentioned, would focus on four objectives: First, encourage French-Canadians to get a Christian education to “former un peuple attaché à sa langue maternelle et aux institutions britanniques, un peuple respectueux des droits des autres mais capable de revendiquer en temps et lieu, une énergique fierté, la part de libertés que donne

¹⁰ The Missionary Oblates of Marie Immaculate founded Bytown College, the precursor of the University of Ottawa, the subsequent year. Lajoie, 83 and 127.

¹¹ Laurence, “*Les Oblats et le journal Le Droit*”, 130.

¹² *Ibid.*, 129.

¹³ “Il faut pour guérir les maux de notre temps employer les moyens appropriés à ses habitudes.” Syndicat d’œuvres Sociales, Pamphlet “*Le Droit*”, 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

si généreusement la couronne d'Angleterre à tous qui vivent avec sa protection.”¹⁵ Schooling, it was noted, would also promote a strong work ethic allowing the French-speaking Catholic minority to support the country’s economic development while further cementing its attachment to Canada.¹⁶ Second, the Syndicat would encourage various strategies to increase the academic success of the province’s French-language minority. This campaign would include supporting the financial solvency of its educational institutions, honoring teachers, and devising innovative bilingual pedagogy to ensure that young people succeeded in all aspects of life.¹⁷ Promoting the economic success of Ontario’s French-speaking minority was the Syndicat’s third focus. The pamphlet explained that the organization would resultantly encourage “les coopératives de production, de ventes et d’achats, les caisses populaires, les organisations ouvrières catholiques, (illegible) ouvrières hygiéniques, les sanatoria, les écoles industrielles, etc.”¹⁸ Lastly, the authors mentioned that their organization would promote colonization by spreading the word that well-qualified and hard-working colonists could be very successful in Ontario because it offered quality soil and a climate favourable to growing crops.¹⁹

The authors went on to explain that the Syndicat would work toward meeting its aims by: organizing conferences; promoting the publication of educational and respectable print materials; providing assistance to school and parish libraries; and sponsoring the establishment of a book store to sell respectable books, journals, and magazines.²⁰ The prospectus noted that the organization would take the lead in launching a newspaper that would reflect the interests of all

¹⁵ Ibid., 1.

¹⁶ Ibid., 1.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1.

¹⁹ Ibid., 1.

²⁰ Ibid., 2.

of Ontario's French-speaking Catholics. This was especially crucial "au milieu où les timides ont toujours tort et où les neutres ne comptent pas, il faut prendre les meilleurs moyens à notre disposition pour faire triompher nos croyances et nos légitimes aspirations."²¹ It was further explained that the broadsheet they envisioned "...prêtera main-forte à ceux qui combattent pour le bien et portera sa large part du fardeau."²² It informed readers that *Le Droit* would be available in February 1913 and would include news reports about important happenings from across the country. Its content would, however, be censored as "les scandales et les racontars sensationnels seront invariablement laissés de côté."²³ *Le Droit* would also cover political questions from all levels of government but the Syndicat's directors promised the organ would retain its independence from any party or politicians.²⁴

The Syndicat's directors made sure to explain that their planned newspaper, aside from fighting to protect the minority rights of the province's French-speaking Catholic population, would follow Pope Pius X's aspiration of sticking to a "bonne presse" format to spread Catholic ideals. Fulfilling this double duty had been explicitly mentioned at the 1910 conference when the possibility of launching a battle organ was tabled. C.S.O Boudreault explained at the convening that a "bonne presse" would be quite helpful in educating the province's French-speaking Catholic population.²⁵ It was his opinion that an ideological newspaper "...relèvera leurs aspirations nationales, stimulera leurs efforts sur le terrain économique, leur inculquera de saines

²¹ Ibid., 2.

²² Ibid., 2.

²³ Ibid., 2.

²⁴ Ibid., 2.

²⁵ Father Charles Charlebois's "Les Canadian-Français d'Ontario et La Presse" published in 1912 by ACFÉO provided a detailed account of the arguments aired at the convention in favour of launching a "bonne presse".

notions de vie sociale, les mettra en garde contre les pièges tendus à la morale et à la foi.”²⁶ This intention was embedded in the publication’s founding doctrines discussed by the broadsheet’s leadership at subsequent private meetings. Specifically, the minutes of a February 17, 1913 gathering explained that it was intended “...que *Le Droit* se conforme non seulement au programme général tracé aux journalistes catholiques, mais se garde de faire aucune attaque contre l’autorité religieuse...”²⁷ The latter warning, that the publication must be very mindful to never attack the Catholic Church, was reiterated at a subsequent directors’ meeting held before *Le Droit* hit newsstands and again a few months after it appeared.²⁸ These guidelines clearly imply that those who led the Syndicat were keen to abide by their public declaration of providing an organ sanctioned by Catholic clerics respecting the “bonne presse” approach.

Meeting records show that, from the outset, it was made clear that a cleric working at the newspaper had to sign off on proposed content before it went to the presses. Minutes from a meeting of the Executive Committee held in September, 1913 clearly indicate this expectation. It is stated that the Executive Committee prepared a letter for Mr. Caron, *Le Droit*’s Editor, explaining:

Après avoir étudié votre communication du 22 Septembre courant le Comité Exécutif a résolu que dorénavant tous les articles se rapportant aux Journaux catholiques, aux institutions religieuses et aux affaires touchant l’Église, les prêtres et l’Association Canadienne Française d’Éducation d’Ontario, les Irlandais et les journaux Canadiens français de la ville pris nommément a partie, soient soumis au rev. p. C. Charlebois

²⁶ Dionne, “Une première prise de parole collective”, 7.

²⁷ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-5 Journal *Le Droit*: Correspondances, document, rapports, etc. 1912-1924. Procès-verbal, February 17, 1913.

²⁸ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-5 Journal *Le Droit*: Correspondances, document, rapports, etc. 1912-1924. Procès-verbal, March 17, 24 and October 13, 1913.

ou à son absence au rev. p. Guillaume Charlebois ou à l'abbé O. Lalonde avant leur publication dans *Le Droit*.²⁹

This strategy was mentioned again at the next monthly meeting wherein a motion was passed stating that, in accordance with verbal directives that had already been given, Mr. Caron would henceforth require the approval of a cleric staff member before submitting any content for print.³⁰ The issue of the Oblates having full oversight of the broadsheet's content actually came to head soon thereafter as a result of a complaint made by Father Charlebois. The minutes of an Administrative Committee meeting held on January 12th, 1914 explain that the clergyman blustered that, according to him, some of the broadsheet's content controverted "bonne presse" expectations.³¹ He proclaimed that *Le Droit*'s subpar editorial approach made it difficult for the Oblates to continue to support and champion the daily. Members of the Administrative Committee took Father Charlebois' concerns very seriously. They decided to create a new position at *Le Droit* to ensure its content met the standards of a proper Catholic newspaper. It was agreed that a representative from the Church should assume this censorship role.³² Father Charlebois assumed this position on an interim basis. Two years later the Bureau de Direction confirmed him as the daily's permanent "Directeur de censure" (Censorship Director).³³ He held the position until September 25, 1930 when he was replaced by Father Gabriel Sarrazin.³⁴

²⁹ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-3 Journal *Le Droit* : Procès-verbaux. Réunion du Comité Administratif, September 15, 1913.

³⁰ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-3 Journal *Le Droit* : Procès-verbaux. Réunion du Comité Administratif, October 13, 1913.

³¹ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-3 Journal *Le Droit* : Procès-verbaux. Réunion du Comité Administratif, January 12, 1914.

³² Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-3 Journal *Le Droit* : Procès-verbaux. Réunion du Comité Administratif, January 12, 1914.

³³ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-3 Journal *Le Droit* : Procès-verbaux. Réunion du Bureau de Direction, January 11, 1916.

³⁴ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-6 Journal *Le Droit* : Correspondances, documents, rapports, etc. 1922-1946. 8-25-1930 and Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-6 Journal *Le Droit* : Correspondances, documents, rapports, etc. 1922-1946. 6-6-1929.

Sarrazin held the position until he resigned on July 23, 1933.³⁵ At that time, the Oblates informed Esdras Terrien, President of the Syndicat d'oeuvres sociales limitée, that they would not be providing a replacement for the departing priest.³⁶ The oversight the Oblates had over the previous two decades guaranteed that *Le Droit's* editorial content promoted social Catholicism.³⁷ The Censorship Director was, for all intents and purposes, the gatekeeper of anything that appeared in the publication. A document dated August 21, 1916 provides insight into the omnipotent power Father Charlebois wielded over the daily's content. It explained that he, as Censorship Director, acted as a de facto representative of the Executive Committee, within the offices of the newspaper. The Oblate was responsible "...pour la surveillance de la rédaction. Les articles de rédaction, les entrefilets, le courrier de la province, les 'en marge des événements' doivent être soumis à son approbation, il surveillera aussi le service des nouvelles, et le côté moral des annonces."³⁸ Only material he deemed appropriate according to the benchmarks of a "bonne presse" would be printed.

The closing section of the Syndicat's strategic plan mentioned how the daily would be used in the struggle to uphold the rights of the province's French-speaking Catholics. The organizers noted that it was not their intention to spur antagonism in their campaign. This conciliatory approach became a cornerstone of three associations that were launched at the end of the decade with the intention of promoting moderation and unity across the province. Leaders

³⁵ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-3 Journal Le Droit : Procès-verbaux. 7-23-1933.

³⁶ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-6 Journal Le Droit: Correspondances, document, rapports, etc. 1922-1946. Lettre des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée à Esdras Terrien, 23/07/1933.

³⁷ Laurence, "Les Oblats", 130.

³⁸ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-5 Journal Le Droit : Correspondances, document, rapports, etc. 1912-1924. August 21, 1916.

of the province's French-speaking Catholic minority leveraged the Ligue de la Bonne Entente (formed in 1916), the Better Understanding Association (formed in 1918) and the Unity League of Ontario (formed in 1921) to pressure the government to recognize their language rights.³⁹ Those who supported the "bonne entente" approach preached cooperation with the province's English-speaking Protestant majority. A moderate stance was also needed to avoid alienating the significant faction of Ontario Catholics who spoke English. Their support was certainly required in this fight to secure language rights. It must be noted that a small faction of Franco-Ontarian hardliners led by Samuel Genest opposed the "bonne entente" position as they thought it was too conciliatory. In fact, Genest complained in 1914 to those who controlled the newspaper that *Le Droit* needed to be more aggressive in its approach against those who threatened the rights of the province's minority. The minutes of a March 3, 1914 meeting captured how those who subscribed to a more moderate strategy camp met this criticism. It was recorded that C.S.O. Boudreau explained "Je sais qu'il est assez difficile de plaire à tout le monde, et bien que le plus grand nombre désire le journal plus vif à l'attaque, il y a plusieurs considérations qui commandent d'agir avec prudence..." and J.A. Caron added "il faut remarquer que le ton du journal étant plus agressif pourrait plaire davantage au peuple, mais qu'il est préférable de ménager certaines opinions."⁴⁰ Those who controlled the newspaper made this point clear during two closed-door meetings before the organ's birth and at another meeting after it appeared. In each case, those who drafted content for the newspaper were reminded not to attack the province's Irish Catholic population.⁴¹ Father Charlebois reiterated this point at a prelaunch

³⁹ Robert Talbot, "Une réconciliation insaisissable : le mouvement de la Bonne Entente, 1916-1930" (*Mens*, volume 8, Fall 2007), 74.

⁴⁰ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-3 Journal Le Droit: Procès-verbaux. Rapport de l'Assemblée des Actionnaires du Syndicat d'œuvres sociales, March 3, 1913.

⁴¹ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-5 Journal Le Droit: Correspondances, document, rapports, etc. 1912-1924. Procès-verbal, March 17, 24 and October 13, 1913.

meeting of those who controlled *Le Droit*. At this gathering, the Oblates' representative sponsored a motion that the publication was expected to act in a fashion "(qui) respecte toujours l'autorité, qu'on n'attaque pas les Irlandais ou les Anglais..."⁴² This moderate tone was expected to limit any enmity with the English-speaking majority as they campaigned to protect their own rights.⁴³ Securing these rights, they mentioned in this prospective edition, was couched in the *British fair play* "...dont les vrais Anglais sont justement si fiers."⁴⁴ The first edition of the organ ultimately appeared on March 27 with C.S.A. Boudreau as Manager, J.-A. Caron as Editor, and Moise Lavoie in charge of gathering information.⁴⁵

Le Droit's shifting focus

Between 1914 and 1933 *Le Droit* published ten editorials marking the anniversary of its birth. This content served to remind readers why *Le Droit* had been launched, as well as to showcase the progress it had made in meeting its initial dual mandate. They likewise revisited the cornerstones of the organ's mission, approach, and scope.⁴⁶ These anniversary edition editorials were touchstone opportunities for *Le Droit* to explain its *raison d'être* and strategies

⁴² Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. MCF 18-5 Journal *Le Droit*: Correspondances, documents, rapports, etc. 1912-1924. Procès-verbal, March 17, 1913.

⁴³ Choquette, *La foi*, 2. The "bonne entente" movement gained momentum in the beginning of the 1920s when Ontario's English-speaking Protestant majority seemed decreasingly less concerned with the issue of the language of education. Choquette, *Langue et Religion*, 225. Ontario Premier Howard Ferguson even went so far as to launch an inquest into the matter in 1925. The survey of bilingual schools was headed by Dr. F. W. Merchant, Chief Director of Education. He tabled a report two years later which the Ferguson administration followed by explaining that it was prepared to recognize French-language education rights. Choquette, *La Foi*, 131. Regulation 17 was officially shelved a few months later. Simon, *Le Règlement XVII*, 36. Father Charlebois, for his part, was not convinced that a softer approach was needed in the face of the government's change of position on the matter. His opposition to those in the "bonne entente" camp eventually led him to be removed from the newspaper in 1930. Charlebois's virulence rankled others in the community to the point that they pushed him out of the region in 1933. He was given the position of Superior at a private high school in Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts. He held this position until his death in 1945. Choquette, *La foi*, 212.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁵ Taillefer, *Le Droit*, 11.

⁴⁶ These anniversary edition editorials appeared yearly from 1914 to 1918, in 1923 to mark the organ's tenth birthday, and 1928 when *Le Droit* reached its fifteenth year in print. 1930, 1932 and 1933 likewise saw the publication of editorials celebrating the broadsheet's milestones since appearing in 1913.

over the two decades. The newspaper likewise touched upon its mandate and focus in less prominent pieces. Nine of those editorials, referred to here as “special editorials”, were published before 1933.⁴⁷ As explained in the Introduction, January 1913’s pre-launch pamphlet outlined the five cornerstones of the coming daily’s intentions. Prospective readers were told to expect a Catholic ideological organ dedicated to fighting Regulation 17. They were also informed that it would use a measured tone to block the erosion of minority language rights. They were likewise told that it was especially important for the broadsheet to abstain from building ties to political figures and parties. This strategy would allow them to attack anyone who threatened the language rights of the province’s French-speaking Catholic minority. Lastly, the missive explained that *Le Droit* would encourage people to adopt an agricultural lifestyle. The newspaper’s inaugural edition revisited these five foundational themes in greater detail, restating the core mandates of following a “bonne presse” format and fighting for the rights of Ontario’s minority French-speaking Catholic population. It was emphasized that *Le Droit* would: employ a restrained tone against those who attacked minority language rights; that it would be politically impartial and eschew involvement in the political arena; and would support an agricultural/rural lifestyle. In the end, content about *Le Droit*’s intentions that appeared in the pre-launch prospectus and the inaugural edition was identical. This set of material laid out a clear and unequivocal strategic plan which readers were told would guide the newspaper’s operations and approach.

⁴⁷ The nine special editorials which outlined the organ’s focus are: J. Albert Fois, “Notre journal”, 3/9/1918; Charles Gautier, “Les fêtes du Droit”, 28/11/1923; Charles Gautier, “Un mot du président”, 30/11/1923; Henri Lessard, “Le véritable journal de Hull”, 2/2/1928; Henri Lessard, “Le Droit dans Hull”, 2/9/1928; Henri Lessard, “Appréciation réciproque”, 1/4/1930; Charles Gautier, “Attitude mal jugée”, 21/5/1930; Henri Lessard, “Le Droit dans Hull”, 28/2/1932; and Esdras Terrien “À vingt ans de distance”, 8/4/1933.

Some of the material about *Le Droit*'s mission, vision and approach which appeared after 1913 was quite similar to what was outlined in the pre-launch pamphlet and inaugural edition. For instance, *Le Droit*'s objective of following a “bonne presse” format was consistently restated in anniversary and special edition editorials from 1914 to 1933. As shown in Figure 1, the “bonne presse” topic was mentioned in nine of 10 anniversary edition editorials while it appeared in five of the nine special editorials exploring *Le Droit*'s intentions.

Figure 1: Catholic Organ

	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1923	1928	1930	1932	1933
Anniversary Editorial	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Special Editorial, 3-9-18					X					
Special Editorial, 11-28-23						X				
Special Editorial, 11-30-23						X				
Special Editorial, 2-2-28							-			
Special Editorial, 9-22-28							X			
Special Editorial, 4-1-30								-		
Special Editorial, 5-21-30								X		
Special Editorial, 2-28-32									-	
Special Editorial, 4-8-33										-

This material positioned the daily as an ideological Catholic organ 14 out of 19 times. And, this premise appeared throughout the period very consistently, i.e. it was mentioned in all but one year under consideration. An overview of both sets of post-1913 editorials shows that *Le Droit* remained publicly committed to positioning itself as a “bonne presse” tool.

Pointing out that *Le Droit* was a combat organ dedicated to preserving the language education rights of Ontario's French-speaking minority was only slightly less often written about in the post-1913 anniversary editorials and special editorials, than assertions of being a “bonne presse”. As shown in Figure 2, the former was noted in seven of the 10 anniversary edition essays, and three of the special editorials.

Figure 2: Combat Newspaper

	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1923	1928	1930	1932	1933
Anniversary Editorial	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-
Special Editorial, 3-9-18					-					
Special Editorial, 11-28-23						X				
Special Editorial, 11-30-23						-				
Special Editorial, 2-2-28							-			
Special Editorial, 9-22-28							X			
Special Editorial, 4-1-30								-		
Special Editorial, 5-21-30								X		
Special Editorial, 2-28-32									-	
Special Editorial, 4-8-33										-

The argument that *Le Droit* was a combat newspaper came up in just over half of the post-1913 editorials explaining its mission and approach. Interestingly, the foundational theme was brought up less and less often after the broadsheet's fifth anniversary. In fact, it was only pointed out in three of the six anniversary edition essays from 1918 to 1933; and was mentioned in only three of nine special editorials. The decreasing importance of the combat newspaper theme likely reflected the fact that, by the early 1920's, many militants behind the language rights movement had adopted a new strategy to fight Regulation 17. As mentioned in the Introduction, they embraced a "bonne entente" approach as Ontario's English-speaking majority seemed unlikely to follow through on Whitney's policy.⁴⁸ When the crisis appeared to be ostensibly over, those who led the charge against Regulation 17 used an increasingly diplomatic approach to convince the government to officially drop this policy option.⁴⁹ *Le Droit* invariably adopted the "bonne

⁴⁸ Choquette, *Langue et Religion*, 225.

⁴⁹ Historian Peter Oliver notes that they instead opted for a "policy of quiet diplomacy and private pressure" to meet their aims. Marcel Martel, "La science politique boude-t-elle la francophonie ontarienne ? Bilan de recherche depuis 1974" in Jacques Cotnam, Yves Frenette and Agnès Whitfield, eds., *La Francophonie Ontarienne : Bilan et perspectives de recherche* (Ottawa : Les Éditions Nordir, 1995), 195. For more on this issue, see Gratien Allaire, "En réaction au Règlement 17 : un nécessaire détour vers l'amélioration pédagogique" in Michel Bock and François Charbonneau, eds., *Le siècle du Règlement 17. Regards sur une crise scolaire et nationale* (Sudbury : Prise de Parole, 2015), and Serge Dupuis, "Les stratégies de l'ACFÉO contre le Règlement 17" in Michel Bock and François Charbonneau, eds., *Le siècle du Règlement 17. Regards sur une crise scolaire et nationale* (Sudbury : Prise de Parole, 2015), 227-246.

entente” technique to avoid sabotaging the aforementioned efforts. In doing so, it downplayed its battle organ position to promote a reconciliation with the English-language majority. Adopting this strategy led the newspaper to reduce the amount of reactive content focused on defeating attacks on Franco-Ontarian language rights. Instead *Le Droit*, as will be shown in a later chapter, increasingly offered more content promoting numerous strategies that was thought could help the minority grow its socio-economic and, by extension, political strength.

Contrary to the Catholic “bonne presse” and battle newspaper themes, the notion of remaining politically independent and outside the political arena was only mentioned sparingly after appearing in 1913’s pre-launch pamphlet and inaugural edition. As shown in Figure 3, this subject was only noted in four of 10 anniversary edition editorials. It appeared in only a slight majority of the overall content outlining *Le Droit*’s strategies (11 of 19), mainly because it was mentioned in seven out of nine special editorials.

Figure 3: Political Independence

	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1923	1928	1930	1932	1933
Anniversary Editorial	X	X	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	-
Special Editorial, 3-9-18					-					
Special Editorial, 11-28-23						X				
Special Editorial, 11-30-23						X				
Special Editorial, 2-2-28							X			
Special Editorial, 9-22-28							-			
Special Editorial, 4-1-30								X		
Special Editorial, 5-21-30								X		
Special Editorial, 2-28-32									X	
Special Editorial, 4-8-33										X

Conversely, it only appeared in two of eight anniversary edition editorials after 1915. This absence is striking because these were likely to attract the largest audience as the newspaper printed special ‘anniversary’ editions where there was more content including commemorative material. As will be shown later, the organ’s increasing dedication to publishing editorials about political matters was surely related to its decision to give a lower profile to its early claims of wanting to operate unfettered by political biases.

In the pre-launch and initial edition pieces that outlined *Le Droit*’s mandate and approach, it was explained that it would use a moderate tone in its campaign to protect French-language rights in Ontario, while also promoting an agricultural/rural existence. These themes received scant mention in both types of later editorials about the newspaper’s purpose. While the former was brought up in just three of 10 anniversary edition editorials (1914, 1915 and 1923), the latter was never mentioned again. Furthermore, in the nine special editorials printed from 1914 to 1933 neither topic surfaced. The almost total disappearance of these themes in both types of editorials charting *Le Droit*’s intentions is in stark contrast from how the organ positioned itself publicly when it launched.

Le Droit changes its format and style

Although the 1913 pre-launch pamphlet and inaugural edition essay explained the five themes that the organ would focus on, neither spoke to the style that would be used. To a very large extent this was implicit in the fact that *Le Droit* positioned itself as an ideological “bonne presse” partly driven to promote social Catholicism. In short, the public could expect a battle organ that would place its instructive mission ahead of showcasing news items and entertaining content which commercial newspapers provided in spades. However, an increasing amount of attention was paid in anniversary edition and special editorials to *Le Droit*’s changing format and style. For instance, 1918’s “Notre journal” mentioned that it was undergoing significant changes in order to increase the amount of news reports it published. This opinion piece trumpeted the fact that *Le Droit* had recently signed agreements with La Presse Canadienne and La Presse Association to publish the event-related materials they supplied.⁵⁰ It was explained that relying on these automatic newsfeed agencies for fresh content would improve the daily’s quality “...tout en conservant son caractère éducatif, tout en donnant à la rédaction l’importance qu’elle doit avoir dans un journal sérieux.”⁵¹ This juxtaposition clearly attempted to make the case that, although *Le Droit* would offer more mainstream commercial newspaper-type content, it nevertheless remained committed to its founding intention of offering a serious educational broadsheet.

Esdras Terrien, President of the Syndicat d’oeuvres sociales limitée, authored an editorial marking the tenth anniversary of the birth of his organization similarly touching on the daily’s evolution. In his November 30, 1923 essay “Un mot du Président”, he explained how, in a quest

⁵⁰ J. Albert Foisy, “Notre journal”, 3/9/1918, 1.

⁵¹ Ibid. Newspaper citations for the remainder of this chapter will refer to *Le Droit*.

to meet the demands of its readers, *Le Droit* had undertaken significant formatting changes over the past decade. Nevertheless, Terrien noted, *Le Droit* would continue to filter content and not print the salacious-type of material found in commercially-driven newspapers. According to him:

...quels que soient les progrès accomplis, un journal catholique indépendant se refuse des sources de revenus faciles et abondantes en chassant de ses colonnes les comptes rendus de crimes sensationnels qui énervent le lecteur, et sont une école de vice pour la jeunesse, les annonces de théâtres où la majorité des spectacles sont immoraux, anticatholiques et antifrançais...⁵²

In essence Terrien's piece served to reassure the public that *Le Droit*, while offering a greater share of news items, remained dedicated to its ideological aims. Readers, the President noted, should rest assured that *Le Droit*, although it used a few signposts of commercial newspapers, was committed to its wholesome and educational spirit.

Combing *Le Droit*'s archival content shows that changing the organ's format did not occur arbitrarily. The organ's stylistic makeover across its first two decades resulted from a set of measured decisions made by those at the daily's helm. Internal material from 1913 to 1933 shed lights on why *Le Droit*'s leaders felt they needed to change the format relatively soon after *Le Droit* hit newsstands.⁵³ Examining this content reveals that financial pressures forced the daily to alter its publishing style. As was outlined in the Introduction, a lack of capital forced the militants who led the Syndicats to rely on a substantial amount of monetary and in-kind support

⁵² Charles Gautier, "Un mot du Président", 11/30/1923, 3.

⁵³ Namely ACFÉO and *Le Droit* correspondence along with the Minutes and reports of their respective administrative meetings as well as the personal correspondences of the Censorship Directors (Père Charles Charlebois and Père Gabriel Sarrazin) and the organ's most prominent editorial contributors—Harry Bernard, Fulgence Charpentier, J. Edmond Cloutier, J. Albert Foisy, Charles Gautier, Henri Lessard, Camille L'Heureux, Charles Michaud, Thomas Poulin and Léopold Richer.

from the Oblates to carry on operations.⁵⁴ Specifically, these documents capture how those who controlled the organ were continually concerned with finding revenue opportunities to make up for the fact that they did not have a rich benefactor to keep it afloat. Because of this, those at the Syndicat and *Le Droit* were forced to pay increasing amounts of attention on how to attract the newspaper-buying public and, by extension, advertisers. The evidence indicates that *Le Droit*'s financial problems began within two years of its launch.⁵⁵ A year-end report by the Office of the Directors submitted in March 1916 to the Syndicat d'oeuvres sociales limitée's shareholders highlighted what had transpired in the previous twelve months, and the important considerations they had in mind for the upcoming year. According to the report, the newspaper had recently made formatting changes to cater to readers. It was explained that, even though modifications had been made, the organ remained true to its original aim of "...écrire pour instruire, pour renseigner et faire la lutte d'une manière courageuse et indépendante."⁵⁶ This statement brings to light a significant challenge to *Le Droit*'s overseers who found themselves in the unenviable position of striving to offer an educational daily at a time when newspaper audiences clamoured for news reports, diversified material, and entertaining content. The trial of finding a way to fulfil seemingly contradictory aims was mentioned outright in a letter later that same year from the Secretary of the Syndicat to *Le Droit*'s Editor-in-Chief and editorial writers. The author stated that more changes to the daily's format were needed as several complaints had been lodged about the newspaper's unappealing style. According to him:

On se plaint, depuis quelque temps, en certains quartiers,
que la lecture du journal devient monotone et que, de ce chef,

⁵⁴ The Syndicats had raised \$100,000 by selling common shares to launch the organ. However, *Le Droit* had only about \$2,000 left in its coffers by the end of its first year. The newspaper ran a deficit for the majority of its first few years. Lajoie, "Charles Charlebois", 49-50.

⁵⁵ *Le Droit*'s archival holdings do not include financial statements or records (sources of revenue and detailed expenses) related to the organ's commercial operations.

⁵⁶ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds *Le Droit* C71 : MCF 18-3 (1^{er} Volume 1912-1922), 22/3/1916.

le travail des Rédacteurs se ralentit et ne contribue plus, comme par les mois passés, à faire aimer le journal. De plus en plus, on se plaint, et cela, de la part de lecteurs qui ne reçoivent que le journal « Le Droit », que notre journal ne contient pas assez de nouvelles; que surtout depuis deux semaines, il y a trop de reproduction et pas assez de nouvelles, soit locales, soit en dehors d'Ottawa.⁵⁷

The staff was asked to put more effort "...de rendre le journal plus attrayant et d'y insérer plus de nouvelles, afin de contenter ceux de nos lecteurs qui vivent à la campagne et qui n'ont pas comme nous l'avantage de lire plus qu'un journal ?"⁵⁸ The editorialists were instructed to take these remarks very seriously and that the Syndicat wished for them to "...mettent du dévouement et un peu plus de travail afin de rendre notre journal intéressant et instructif tout à la fois."⁵⁹ These instructions reveal how financial pressures forced those who had launched *Le Droit* to accept that their decision to publish a traditional ideological organ was a misguide given that consumers preferred the format and style of commercial newspapers. Those who administered the broadsheet were in a difficult position because one aspect of their core aims—offering an ideological battle mouthpiece—actually undermined their ability to remain financially solvent.

Those at *Le Droit* recognized how adopting the common newsprint format could increase readership and attract lucrative advertising contracts. An Office of Directors report submitted to the Syndicat's shareholders in early 1917 made the case for changing the newspaper's format to leverage advertising revenues:

Je tiens à soumettre dès maintenant ces calculs à votre comité, car il faudra sans doute songer sérieusement à faire un changement dans un avenir rapproché, si l'on veut donner satisfaction à nos lecteurs. Il est reconnu que la vie

⁵⁷ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds *Le Droit* C71 : MCF 18-5 (Syndicats d'œuvres sociales limitées), 11/7/1916.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

d'un journal dépend surtout de ses annonces, et il n'y a pas moyen d'augmenter les nôtres davantage, en conservant ce format. Il y a déjà plusieurs mois que nos lecteurs sont mécontents parce qu'il n'y a pas assez de nouvelles.⁶⁰

This statement was an obvious call to action to alter *Le Droit* to make it more appealing to the public and, by extension, advertisers, who would provide the bulk of the revenue needed to remain in print. It also provides further evidence that those who oversaw the organ recognized that retaining the current design would likely lead to financial ruin. They realized it was imperative to transform the daily's style from an uninspiring ideological format to something akin to a commercial styled newspaper. Deciding to undertake this shift demonstrates their pragmatism. They could see that remaining true to the original format would result in the organ's demise. Losing *Le Droit*, they surely recognized, was unacceptable as it had a very important role to play in the campaign to protect the rights of the province's French-language Catholic minority. Adapting it to the public's tastes was a small price to pay if it meant protecting a much-needed weapon in the fight against assimilationist intentions.

A March, 1929 report from the Office of Directors provides an indication that *Le Droit's* ongoing dire financial straits continued to oblige the daily to diversify its content. According to the document, representatives at *Le Droit* had recently secured a loan from a private company to pay off several debtors.⁶¹ Furthermore, it mentioned that over the past year the Banque Nationale had taken action to recover a loan it had made to the broadsheet for the purposed of building a new office in Ottawa. A short-term arrangement, the report explained, had been negotiated to avoid foreclosure. It beseeched the Syndicat to find new capital to ensure repayment of this new loan by the due date; and stated how the newspaper's financial predicament, as shown by

⁶⁰Ibid., 28/5/1918.

⁶¹ Ibid., 3/2/1920.

accompanying accounting statements, continued to be perilous.⁶² It went on to state that, in an attempt to curtail the organ's troubling debt load, staff had held a brief subscription recruitment campaign which had garnered an impressive number of new readers. Significant changes were also made to *Le Droit's* format with the same aim:

Afin de favoriser l'augmentation du tirage, vos directeurs ont cru bon de vulgariser autant que possible le journal tout en lui gardant son caractère sérieux et catholique, en donnant la première page à l'information. À cette fin, ils ont cru bon de mettre la rédaction en 3ième page. L'aspect extérieur se rapprochant plus des journaux à nouvelle, pouvait engager davantage l'oeil de l'abonné.⁶³

These changes had the effect of inching *Le Droit* closer in style to a full-fledged commercial newspaper. Removing the editorial content from the cover page was a point of discussion at the Syndicat's yearly shareholders meeting, which was held a few weeks later. According to the meeting notes, Father Lalonde wanted to know why it had been decided to insert the editorial content inside the newspaper. It was explained that the adjustment was made because "...le publique et les annonceurs aiment mieux le journal ainsi." ⁶⁴ This point blank answer offers a clear indication of how business imperatives underscored the decisions to modify how the broadsheet presented its content.

The issue of needing to adjust the organ's format to make it more attractive reemerged within a couple of years. The minutes of the Meeting of the Office of Directors held on May 22, 1922 stated that the decision was made to "Essayer des caricatures et quelques lignes de

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds *Le Droit* C71 : MCF 18-3 (1er Volume 1912-1922), 3/2/1920.

féminisme dans notre journal.”⁶⁵ The preliminary attempt to add appealing content for female readers must have met with positive reviews as Father Charlebois tabled a motion a few months later insisting that *Le Droit* make it a permanent fixture.⁶⁶ This idea was seemingly well-received as the Board approved it without debate. The 1923 Office of Directors report mentioned that further content changes had been instituted to promote *Le Droit*’s competitiveness in the newspaper marketplace. It was explained that over the past year:

À mesure que les employés de l’atelier de composition devenaient de plus en plus compétents, pour répondre à un désir plusieurs fois exprimé par nos lecteurs, et pour ne pas se laisser dépasser par les autres journaux, le Bureau de directeurs a décidé de commencer chaque semaine, la publication de quatre pages spéciales : la page du Sacré Cœur, la page des enfants, connue sous le nom de « Royaume des enfants », la page féminine et la page littéraire.⁶⁷

The report then noted that readers very much appreciated these changes, and consequently “(l)e nombre des abonnements qui avait une tendance vers la baisse s’est stabilisé pendant quelque temps pour se diriger lentement vers l’augmentation.”⁶⁸ The document ends by stating that, even though readership had increased slightly, the organ remained in a precarious financial position. The Banque National had: forced *Le Droit* to settle an outstanding debt; warned it about keeping its account on the positive side of the ledger; and reduced its active line of credit from \$1,800 to \$500.⁶⁹ The stakeholders were told that, to meet its obligation to the bank, the newspaper had leveraged its insurance policy to secure a loan from a private company. The Oblates, the document mentioned, also provided an emergency advance to allow the newspaper to clear its

⁶⁵ Ibid., 22/5/1922.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 13/11/1922.

⁶⁷ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds *Le Droit* C71 : MCF 18-6 (Syndicats d’œuvres sociales limitées), 3/6/1923.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

line of credit at the Banque National, and to erase some of its most pressing operating debts.⁷⁰

The Office of Directors Report from 1924 echoed the concerns aired the previous year regarding the newspaper's neverending financial struggles. The Syndicat's shareholders were told that 1923 had been a particularly difficult year for the entire newspaper industry.⁷¹ *Le Droit* had resultantly incurred a staggering \$6,000 debt. Shareholders were asked to authorize a new loan from a private organization to settle a \$7,000 liability owed to the Banque Nationale which needed to be repaid shortly. Having outlined how the organ remained strapped for capital, the document then proposed a new round of formatting and stylistic changes to increase *Le Droit*'s attractiveness. It was mentioned that readers were becoming more and more demanding as they were spoiled by other newspapers which offered abundant and diversified content along with eye catching illustrations.⁷² Refusing to adopt the approach used by their competitors, the report stated, "...est chose impossible, le tirage en souffrirait trop. C'est ainsi qu'aux États-Unis et dans certaines parties du Canada, des journaux très puissants ont dû se fusionner pour éviter le désastre."⁷³ It went on to explain how *Le Droit* had already added an extra 300 pages of material over the past 12 months to ensure readers felt it offered good value for their money. And, to vary its content several new regular columns had also been introduced. This two-fold approach, the report stated, seemed to have paid off almost instantly as "(l)e renvoi des abonnements a diminué même dans les campagnes et le tirage a augmenté dans les villes."⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ According to this report, higher taxes on natural products and an ongoing economic slump drove up production costs while reducing newspaper sales. Ibid., 3/11/1924.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Needing to diversify its content to drive up readership was restated one more time in an Office of Directors Report filed only two years later. The authors noted that catering to the wishes of fickle subscribers was the only way to increase *Le Droit*'s marketplace penetration.⁷⁵ Adding two types of content were identified as especially crucial:

Nous n'avons pas encore de page financière. Elle est cependant demandée par nombre de nos abonnés et par des personnes qui s'abonneraient si nous l'avions. Ces personnes n'ont pas toujours les moyens de s'abonner à deux journaux. Il nous faudrait aussi des illustrations si nous voulons soutenir la concurrence des autres journaux.⁷⁶

1927's Annual Report touched on three related themes: how to improve the newspaper; a summary of subscriptions and advertising revenues; as well as other notable details. The first section, representing close to half of the three-page document, was essentially a policy brief about how the mouthpiece needed to continue to adapt its format to remain competitive in the newsprint world. It mentioned that the majority of newspaper revenues did not typically come from point of purchase sales or prepaid subscriptions. On the contrary, "(a)u Droit, comme dans tous les journaux du Canada et des États-Unis, les revenus proviennent surtout des annonces. Elles obtiennent leur valeur du tirage du journal. Ce tirage est-il considérable, la publicité faite dans ses colonnes vaut beaucoup; l'est-il moins, la valeur de sa publicité est moindre."⁷⁷ What was most important in the newspaper business, the shareholders heard, was an organ's ability to convince businesses that their advertisements would be seen by a substantial audience. Keeping up with the tastes of consumers was the only way to meet the circulation benchmarks that would convince businesses to place ads in *Le Droit*. To do so, the daily had little choice but to offer similar types of material as its mass audience competitors. Failing to use this approach, the report

⁷⁵ Ibid., 23/3/1926.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 29/3/1927.

argued, would invariably lead *Le Droit* to be perceived as an irrelevant “petit journal” not worth any advertising dollars.⁷⁸ Gaining this reputation, it was implied, undermined *Le Droit*’s credibility and would be a serious blow to the daily’s survival.

The report went on to explain that several measures had already been initiated to enhance the newspaper’s attractiveness. For instance, recently purchased printing equipment was allowing it to offer a more respectable 10 to 12 pages per edition.⁷⁹ It was mentioned that increasing its thematic content was especially important. *Le Droit*, it was stated, had consequently introduced its own financial page which, the authors asserted, “...est très bien apprécié par nos lecteurs tant de la campagne que de la ville.”⁸⁰ Also, the newspaper had recently investigated how it could offer more illustrations. According to the report, material produced for other newspapers was not up to *Le Droit*’s “bonne presse” editorial standards.⁸¹ The administrators had considered hiring an in-house illustrator but the expenditure proved too high. As a consequence, it was decided to hold off until the organ was on a better financial footing.⁸²

The second section of the report explained how the organ had recently held a subscription drive. This initiative, it was mentioned, proved especially successful as readers roundly approved of the latest design and content changes. It was further explained that recent efforts to increase the amount of material and tailor content to match public tastes had reduced subscription

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid. The matter was revisited at the tail end of 1929 as the newspaper had identified an illustrator in Montreal who would be a perfect candidate to provide content for the organ. The decision was made on November 25 to approach him about this matter. Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds *Le Droit* C71 : MCF 18-3 (2e Volume 1922-1938), 25/11/1929.

cancellations.⁸³ The impact of the improvements on advertisers was similarly mentioned in the closing section:

Les agences de publicité apprécient mieux notre journal
comme médium d'annonce. Les marchands locaux
s'aperçoivent aussi que notre journal attire chez eux une
clientèle sérieuse. Aussi, les agences et les marchands
reçoivent mieux nos sollicitateurs d'annonces et leur
accordent-ils de meilleurs contrats.⁸⁴

The section ends by signaling how recent enhancements to the newspaper's content and style allowed the organ to earn an extra \$12,500 in advertising sales in the past year compared to the previous twelve months. The authors were convinced that making these changes had been worthwhile.

A 1928 report from the Syndicat d'oeuvres sociales limitée's Board of Director's Executive Committee likewise shows how financial imperatives played a part in driving the newspaper's makeover. It opens by explaining to shareholders that the daily ended the previous year with a slight \$2,600 surplus.⁸⁵ Readers are then told that this positive outcome was partially due to the fact that “(*Le Droit*) s'impose plus à l'attention des annonceurs et de nos compatriotes. Il est plus répandu que jamais dans le territoire exclusif—très restreint tout de même—qu'il couvre.”⁸⁶ It was acknowledged that the incremental adoption of commercial newspaper formatting and stylistic approaches had been crucial to increasing its circulation.⁸⁷ The report mentioned that these tactics led the newspaper to increase its readership by 2,000 over the past year. The document then stated that administrators were exploring ways to continue to diversify

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 3/13/1928.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Le Droit's content. A few specific ideas were mentioned including "...l'illustration, la publication quotidienne de matière spécialement destinée aux enfants, aux femmes voire même aux jeunes gens devront tôt ou tard trouver place dans le journal. Un courrier semblable à celui de Collette dans *La Presse*, pourrait aussi être inauguré avec avantage."⁸⁸ Making these changes would be a continuation of the transformational process which began pretty well from the moment the organ launched. As shown, a lack of internal resources and meagre initial sales forced the Syndicat to consider any option to ensure *Le Droit* remained in print. Embracing a commercial newspaper design was seen as the best solution because it would increase readership and, consequently, raise advertising revenues to offset operating costs.

Le Droit reaches out to a different audience

As mentioned in the previous section, the broadsheet's raison d'être was intimately tied to serving Ontario's French-speaking Catholic population. The pre-launch pamphlet, as well as the inaugural edition, explained that *Le Droit* was intended as a pan-provincial battle newspaper dedicated to fighting Regulation 17. This Ontario-centric focused mantra was repeated in countless editorials in the first few years after it launched. Yet, by the 1920s, content about the newspaper's aim and vision challenged this initial intra-provincial focus. There is evidence of this shift taking place at the same time as the broadsheet's format was undergoing significant modifications. Specifically, by late 1920 a decision was taken to add a page with content mainly about matters on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River. To tell readers what they could expect in this space, a masthead was inserted at the top of page four. It read "Nouvelles de Hull" until it was replaced in 1921 by "Page de Hull". *Le Droit* alternated between these headers for the next twelve years. Further evidence that the daily was trying to extend its readership outside of

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Ontario appeared on November 28, 1923 on the heels a week-long celebration of the Syndicat d'oeuvres sociales limitée's ten-year anniversary. "Les fêtes du Droit" noted how the events had been planned to reflect the qualities of the people of Ottawa, Hull and the surrounding areas.⁸⁹ This was the first instance whereby a *Le Droit* opinion piece explicitly pandered to readers in Quebec. The following year *Le progrès de Hull* appeared. Its arrival caused *Le Droit* to redouble efforts to position itself as a truly local entity.⁹⁰ Tying the newspaper to the people of Hull was central to the editorial "Nous sommes pourtant de Hull" which appeared on May 27, 1927. This opinion piece rebuked accusations that *Le Droit*, because it was printed in Ottawa, did not truly represent the interests of those in Quebec. Henri Lessard, the editorialist who had been hired in 1922 to pen content about Hull, Aylmer and the surrounding towns in Quebec, refuted this claim by stating:

...si Le Droit n'est pas imprimé à Hull, il n'en appartient pas moins à cette ville...et plus que jamais, Le Droit est de Hull. Il s'y répand davantage d'année en année. Depuis plus de deux ans, il y a un bureau d'affaires pour l'occupation duquel il paye régulièrement ses taxes...En outre, ses employés sont pour la moitié des gens de Hull, auxquels il verse en salaires, annuellement, plus de \$35,000.⁹¹

The editorial "Le véritable journal de Hull" from February 2, 1928 likewise claimed that those living across the river from the national capital could count on *Le Droit* to speak to their interests.⁹² A similar editorial appeared later that same year explaining how the daily had dedicated an increasing share of resources to capturing readers on the north shore of the Ottawa River. "Le Droit dans Hull" asserted that, while content for readers from Hull was previously produced by reporters in Ottawa, this task was now in the hands of local writers based in an

⁸⁹ Charles Gautier, "Les fêtes du Droit", 11/28/1923, 3.

⁹⁰ *Le Progrès de Hull* was launched in March 1924. It remained in print until 1972.

⁹¹ Henri Lessard, "Nous sommes pourtant de Hull", 5/27/1927, 4.

⁹² Ibid., "Le véritable journal de Hull", 2/2/1928, 4.

office in downtown Hull.⁹³ The editorial then explained that *Le Droit* had in fact become “...dans le domaine municipal, scolaire, dans le domaine des nouvelles locales, l’informateur prédominant de Hull.”⁹⁴ This was the last opinion piece in a series of editorials from the 1920s commending *Le Droit* for being an Ottawa Valley newspaper.⁹⁵ This repeated claim supports the contention that *Le Droit* had outlived its original intention of focusing exclusively on readers in Ontario.

Editorials promoting the organ as a regional newspaper for Ottawa Valley residents instead of a pan-provincial newspaper continued to appear into the 1930s. For instance, in March 1930 three editorials were published which stated that the broadsheet was partly dedicated to those living on the Ottawa River’s north shore. The editorial “Une nouvelle étape” explained how its growing business on the Quebec side of the provincial border forced *Le Droit* to find more abundant space for its Hull-based operations. It then mentioned that *Le Droit* had been initially launched to defend the rights of French-speaking Catholics in Ontario and to promote social Catholicism. Yet, those who managed the organ recognized that they had a perfect opportunity to spread the latter to Quebec’s nearby French-speaking Catholic population.⁹⁶ This realization, Gautier stated, convinced those at *Le Droit* to adjust their business plan to appeal to those in the Outaouais. An opinion piece printed the next day similarly argued that *Le Droit* was a newspaper for French-speaking Catholics no matter if they lived on the north or south shore of

⁹³ Ibid., “Le Droit dans Hull”, 09/22/1918, 11.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ A masthead was added in 1928 to page four to reinforce this case. It read “Le journal qui a le plus fort tirage dans Hull et la région”. It was changed the following year to “Le journal quotidien spécialement dévoué aux intérêts de Hull et de la région”. In 1933 both mastheads appeared together on top of the page.

⁹⁶ Charles Gautier, “Une nouvelle étape”, 3/25/1930, 3. According to 1921’s census returns, the total population of the cities and towns on the north shore of the Ottawa River had reached 101 511 (Hull, Aylmer, Deschênes, Pointe-Gatineau, Templeton, Masson, Buckingham, and Thurso). Chad Gaffield, *Histoire de l’Outaouais* (Québec : Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1997), 97.

the waterway.⁹⁷ A third editorial entitled “Appréciation Réciproque” made the same point. It presented excerpts from a speech Esdras Terrien had given to celebrate the opening of the new office in Hull. In addressing mayor Théodore Lambert, Terrien explained:

La ville que vous représentez, Monsieur le Maire, occupe presque une aussi grande place dans nos affections que celle où nous sommes. Votre population nous intéresse à l'égal de celle de la capitale et le nombre de nos abonnés dans la cité transandine suit de près celui d'Ottawa. Aussi nous pouvons nous féliciter et je crois que vous conviendrez, de vous fournir un service de choix. Un rédacteur et un nouvelliste sont assignés exclusivement à votre ville et si nous écoutons des voix autorisées, notre reporteur à votre Hôtel de Ville n'est pas sans vous rendre de très grands services.⁹⁸

The editorial then mentioned that *Le Droit*, although printed in Ottawa, should be embraced by the people of Hull because it served them equally. The fact that the newspaper's masthead included the name of the city of Hull as predominately as the name of the city of Ottawa, Terrien argued, was proof of *Le Droit*'s commitment to Quebec-based readers. Lastly, it was pointed out that “(L)a page de Hull, avec sa rédaction et toutes les nouvelles locales, voire celle des paroisses Québécoises environnantes, apporte à la population hulloise les idées et l'information désirables.”⁹⁹ It was similarly argued in a February 28, 1932 editorial titled “Le Droit dans Hull” that the newspaper was as much an advocate for those in Hull as it was for the people in Ottawa.¹⁰⁰ This cluster of content shows that by the early 1930s *Le Droit* had stopped branding itself as a newspaper exclusively devoted to serving Ontario's French-speaking minority. Within two decades of launching, the daily had rebranded itself as a broadsheet for readers throughout Ontario as well as across the river from the national capital.

⁹⁷ Charles Gautier, “La cérémonie de hier”, 3/26/1930, 3.

⁹⁸ Henri Lessard, “Appréciation réciproque”, 4/1/1930, 4.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Henri Lessard, “Le Droit dans Hull”, 2/28/1932, 3.

Le Droit's editorial page reflects its evolution

It is fair to say the militants who launched *Le Droit* recognized the organ's editorial page would be the most appropriate platform to act on its dual raison d'être. Much of its content would argue for the protection of French-language rights in Ontario and blocking Regulation 17. The editorial page would likewise feature positions in line with the precepts of social Catholicism. This notion led *Le Droit* to offer a very robust editorial page. At the outset, opinion pieces were placed on the front page which was customary for conventional ideological broadsheets. As mentioned in the previous section, financial considerations led *Le Droit*'s overseers to move editorials from the front page within the organ—typically on page three—so news reports could be featured on the front page.¹⁰¹ This change, as we have seen, was made to match public preferences. Saving the front page for news content exemplified how the organ adopted commercial newspaper formatting.

A closer examination of material that appeared in *Le Droit*'s editorial page from 1913 to 1933 shows that a significant transformation in its content started some time before opinion pieces moved inside the organ. Aggregated editorial content by themes reveals how the broadsheet's adoption of a commercial newspaper format affected its editorial page.¹⁰² Combining material by main subjects led to ten general categories.¹⁰³ Each of these General Topics contain between three and fifteen sub-headings which segregates material by specific

¹⁰¹ As previously mentioned, *Le Droit* added a separate set of editorial content on page four in 1922 to grow its readership in Quebec.

¹⁰² My content analysis of editorial material from *Le Droit*'s launch in March, 1913 to May, 1933 includes 10 788 editorials.

¹⁰³ Although twelve distinct General Topics emerged, the quantitative review does not include the General Topic World War I as well as the General Topic Great Depression. These two themes were omitted as they include material from relatively brief periods and contain limited content.

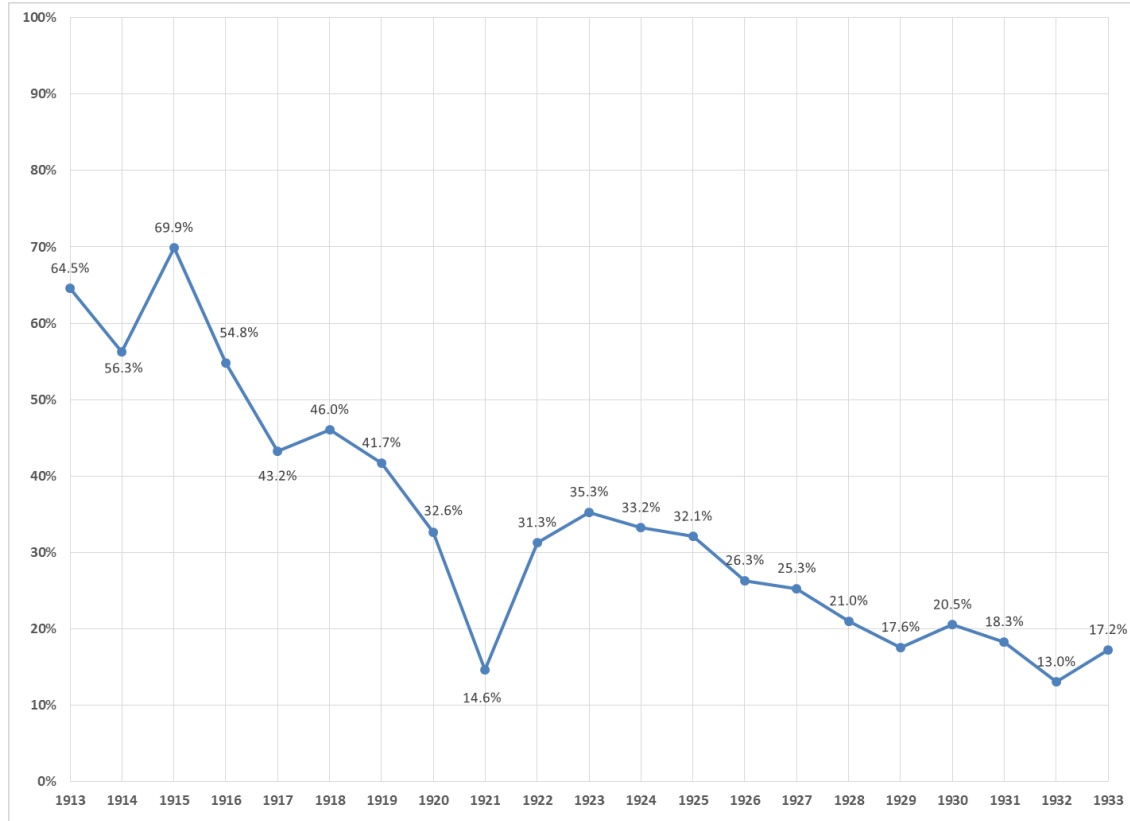
theme.¹⁰⁴ Comparing the ten General Topics across the 1913 to 1933 period shows the newspaper's editorial priorities. According to this quantitative breakdown, editorial material in the first few years after the broadsheet launched reflected *Le Droit*'s two-fold founding mission—offering a traditional “bonne presse” ideological organ that focused on promoting social Catholicism and protecting the minority language rights of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic population. The greater majority of editorials at the outset did in fact focus on religious and language-rights topics. As shown in Figure 4, content from the General Topic Religion and Language represented almost two-thirds of the editorial material published in 1913. This General Topic covered several themes, including the moral importance of infusing education with spiritual doctrine, ensuring that faith-based schools receive their fair share of funding, the work of Catholic charities and community groups, and material about the Catholic Church, the Papacy, and explorations of catholic doctrine.¹⁰⁵ Material in the latter included pieces promoting the use of French locally and throughout Canada, French-language discrimination, and news about Regulation 17.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ See Appendix B: Thematic Index of General Topics with Related Subheadings.

¹⁰⁵ This material includes: Unsigned, “La St. Vincent de Paul”, 4/5/13, 1; C. A. Latour, “Vers l'autel”, 5/19/13, 1; Charles Gautier, “L'éducation catholique”, 8/14/20, 3; Fulgence Charpentier, “Les Canadiens français d'Ottawa et la taxe des écoles séparées”, 11/14/23, 3; Henri Lessard, “Œuvre qui prospère”, 4/10/28, 4; Camille L'Heureux, “Un centenaire”, 7/20/31, 3; Charles Gautier, “La Sainte-Catherine”, 11/15/32, 3; and Charles Gautier, “Un siècle de charité”, 5/27/33.

¹⁰⁶ This material includes: Unsigned, “Le français, langue universelle”, 5/6/13, 1; unsigned, “La francophobie”, 7/8/13, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “Plus Boches que les Boches”, 1/18/18, 3; Charles Gautier, “Une campagne antifranaise”, 8/9/26, 3; Charles Gautier, “Nous aurons un timbre bilingue”, 4/7/27, 3; Camille L'Heureux, “Publicité française”, 10/27/30, 3; Charles Michaud, “Pour nos écoles bilingues”, 6/27/29, 3; Charles Gautier, “L'injonction Mackell”, 1/30/31, 3; and Henri Lessard, “Campagne de refrancisation”, 4/7/33, 4.

Figure 4: General Topic Religion and Language

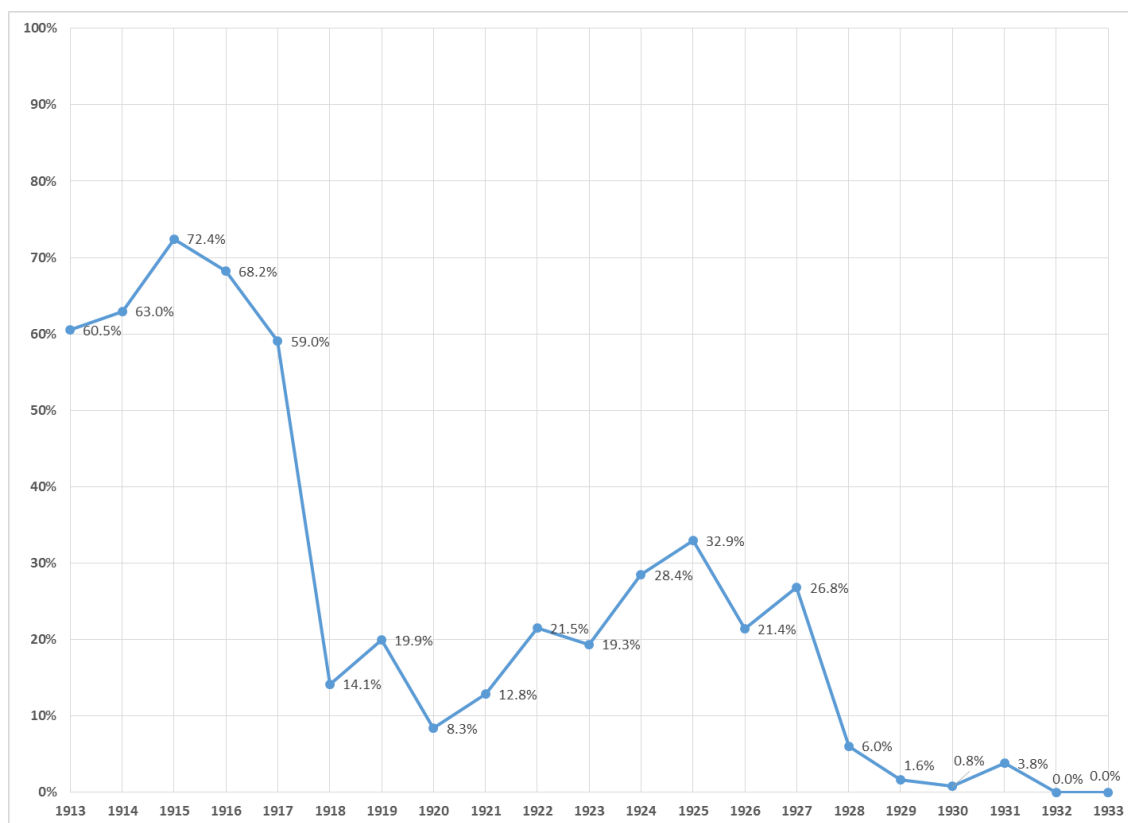


The majority of editorial material for the next four years was from this General Topic. However, from that point on, fewer and fewer opinion pieces focused on religious and language-related matters. By 1920 the share of editorials dedicated to these topics was reduced by almost half. By the end of the 1920s, the General Topic Religion and Language represented less than one-fifth of the organ's editorial content. Its drop continued into the early 1930s. The steady decrease of this type of editorial material partially reflects the fact that, although the fight against Regulation 17 was not won until the Ferguson government shelved it in 1927, provincial officials were indicating as early as the beginning of the 1920s that they intended to drop this policy.¹⁰⁷ The organ seemingly chose to publish fewer and fewer opinion pieces about the matter as it no longer

¹⁰⁷ Choquette, *La foi : Gardienne de la langue en Ontario*, 193. The aggregate counts of the four subheadings in the General Topic Religion and Language was 141 in 1913, 153 in 1914, 205 in 1915 and 159 in 1916.

believed that taking a harsh, combative tone was appropriate. Embracing the “bonne entente” approach seemed worthwhile and promising. Changing its approach converged with a new stance adopted by those at the newspaper which saw it increasingly focus upon proactive strategies that Franco-Ontarians could use to shield themselves from assimilation. These patterns are evident by disaggregating the editorial content in this General Topic to isolate material specifically about Regulation 17—subheadings Regulation 17, Regulation 17 and Catholicism, Regulation 17 and WWI, Regulation 17 and WWI and military participation. As shown in Figure 5, content about Regulation 17 dominated the General Topic during the first four years of the newspaper.

Figure 5: Editorial content in the General Topic Religion and Language about Regulation 17



However, *Le Droit* published significantly fewer opinion pieces about it after 1917 causing it to be overtaken by the other subheadings in the General Topic Religion and Language. Decreasing the share of material about Regulation 17 provided the organ a timely opportunity to diversify its editorial material. The convergence of this practice with its proactive strategy to encourage the survival of the Franco-Ontarian minority happened to coincide with the newspaper-buying public's preference for opinion pieces that crossed the social, political and economic gamut.

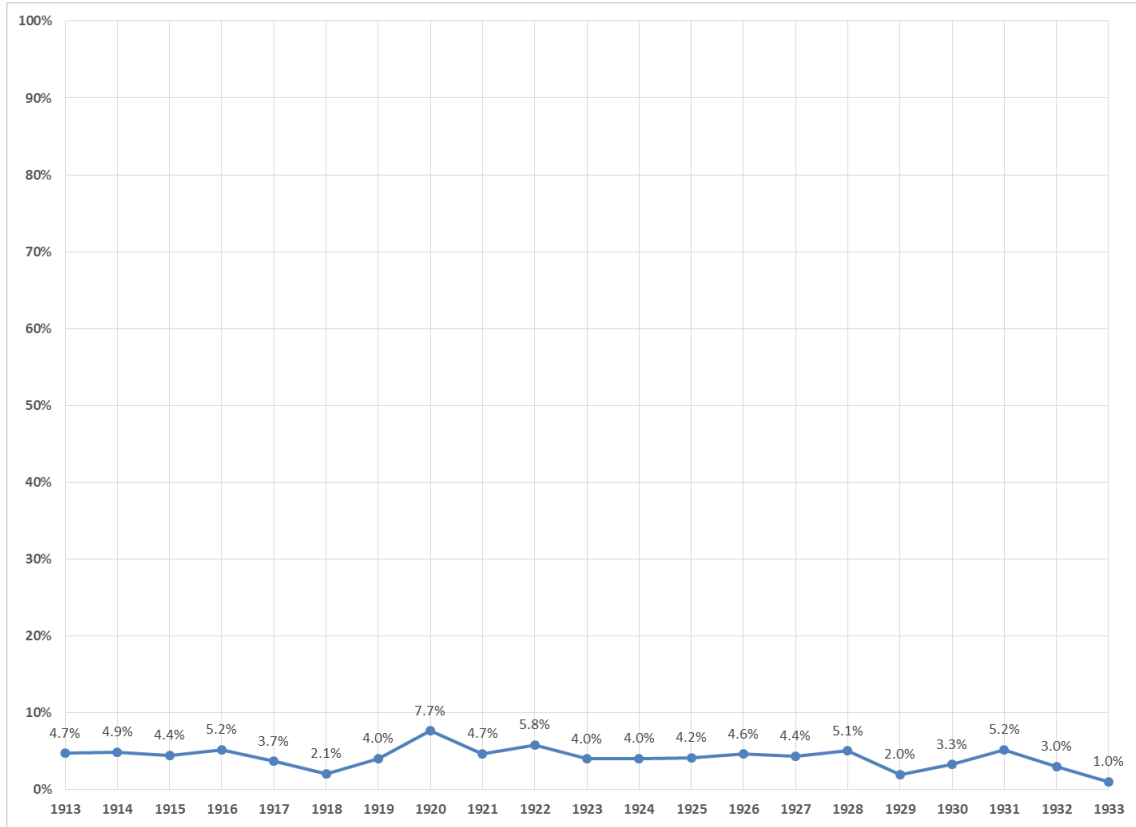
Secondly, a content analysis reveals how *Le Droit*'s editorial page routinely focused on themes pertinent to social Catholicism—for instance, values and ideals (e.g. appropriate conduct, controlling alcohol consumption, and managing finances responsibly)¹⁰⁸, the family (e.g. proper gender roles, the sanctity of marriage, and the importance of high reproductive rates)¹⁰⁹ as well as the benefits of education (e.g. returns of a formal education and other learning opportunities).¹¹⁰ This type of content was to be expected from a “bonne presse” with an editorial board controlled by the Oblates. In brief, the organ allowed those who oversaw its content to advocate for behaviours they believed underscored a wholesome society reflecting social Catholicism. However, it should be noted that from 1913 to 1933, editorials promoting social Catholicism were surprisingly few. For example, Figure 6 shows how the General Topic Values & Ideals, only surpassed the five percent mark three times in these two decades.

¹⁰⁸ This material includes: Unsigned, “Dansez-vous le tango ?”, 12/13/13, 1; Luc Bérard, “Justice et charité”, 10/15/19, 3; Charles Gautier, “Contre les affiches inconvenants”, 6/26/24, 3; Henri Lessard, “Endroits peu recommandables”, 12/27/28, 4; and Camille L'Heureux, “Nous contribuerons”, 11/14/32, 3.

¹⁰⁹ This material includes: Unsigned, “Ayons du caractère”, 6/16/13, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “Le vote des femmes”, 8/4/19, 3; Charles Michaud, “Divorces au Canada”, 10/31/27, 3; and Henri Lessard, “Le travail des femmes”, 1/28/32, 4.

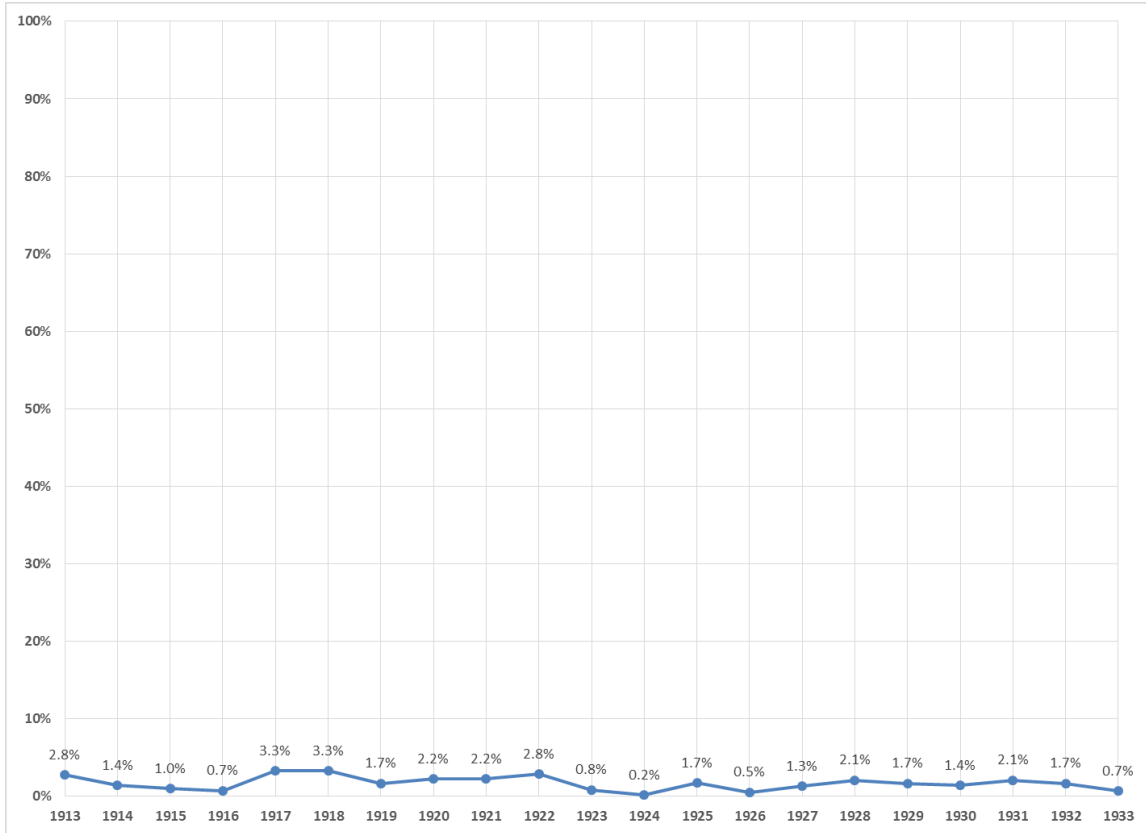
¹¹⁰ This material includes: Omer Héroux, “L'école obligatoire”, 12/5/13, 1; Thomas Poulin, “L'école technique”, 6/3/19, 4; Charles Gautier, “Les cours du soir”, 10/14/24, 3; Charles Michaud, “Dans nos collèges”, 12/9/29, 3; and Charles Gautier, “L'Université de Montréal”, 2/2/32, 3.

Figure 6: General Topic Values & Ideals



The General Topic Family received even less attention. The former consistently represented a small fraction of overall editorial content. Figure 7 reveals that during *Le Droit*'s first decade, opinion pieces about family matters never represented more than 3.3% of all editorial material.

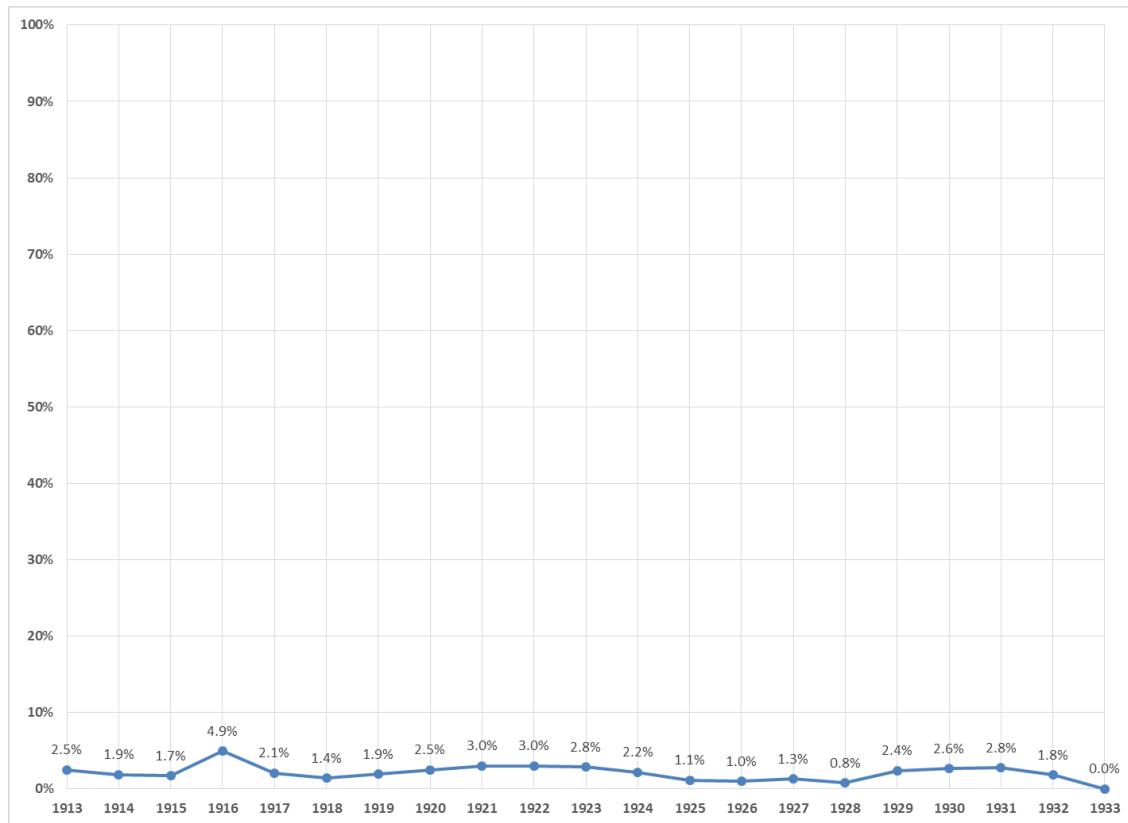
Figure 7: General Topic Family



Aside from a slight spike in 1922 (2.8%), the share of content about this subject remained relatively small to 1933. On average, it represented less than 2% of editorial content in these two decades. It is somewhat unexpected that a broadsheet that touted itself as partially dedicated to promoting social Catholicism would have such a paltry amount of content about family matters.

Content encouraging a proper education received even less attention than substance in the General Topic Family. Figure 8 shows that, aside from a spike in 1916 (4.9%), material about this subject represented less than three percent of editorial content to 1933.

Figure 8: General Topic Education



Aggregating these three General Topics reveals the limited proportion of editorials in *Le Droit* that promoted the cornerstones of an ideal society. The General Topics Values & Ideals, Family, and Education together represented less than eight percent of *Le Droit*'s entire editorial content over the period.

The statistical analysis reveals that *Le Droit* paid a remarkable amount of attention to topics outside of its two-fold mission. As mentioned, soon after launching, those who controlled the organ recognized that readers were not interested in buying an orthodox ideological broadsheet fixated on a narrow range of topics. To keep readers happy, *Le Droit* diversified its editorial content as part of the formatting and stylistic transformations. For instance, Figure 9

shows how the General Topic General Matters experienced notable spikes when the newspaper provided its opinion on newsworthy events (i.e. recent criminal activities, gatherings of note, fires or major accidents, notable deaths, etc...) and foreign affairs (happenings from other countries or regions around the world).¹¹¹

Figure 9: General Topic General Matters

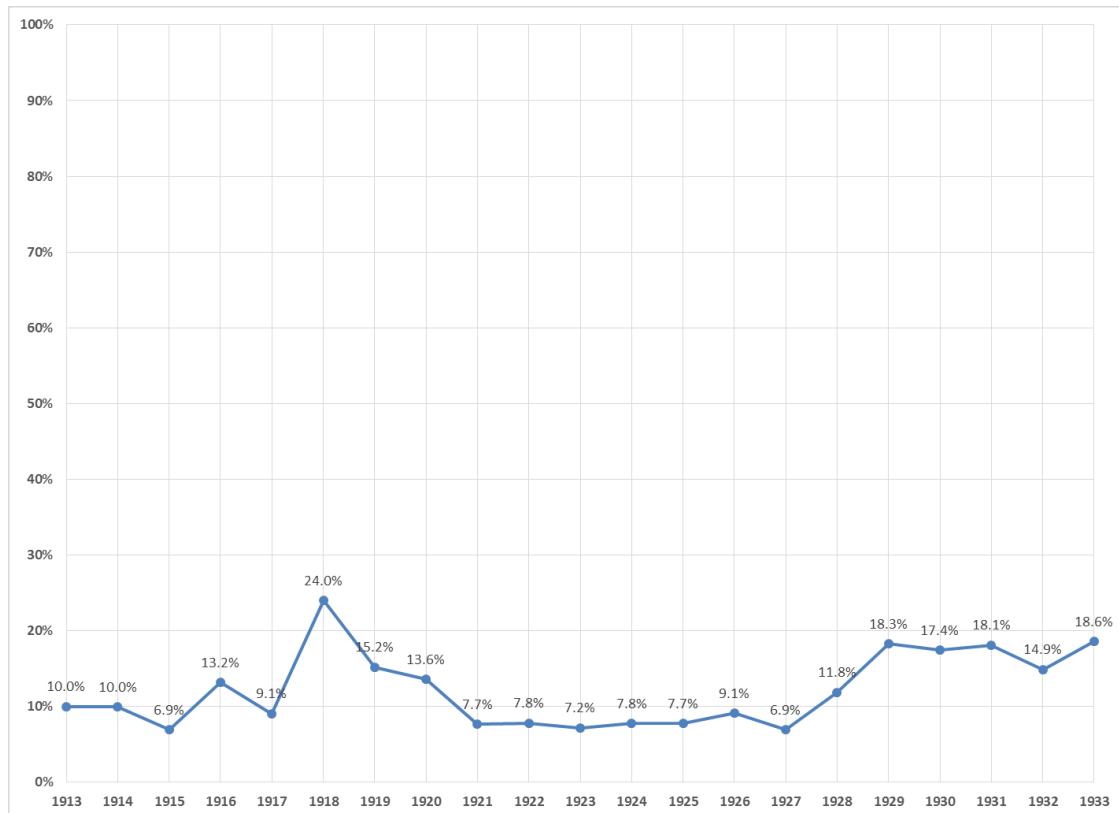
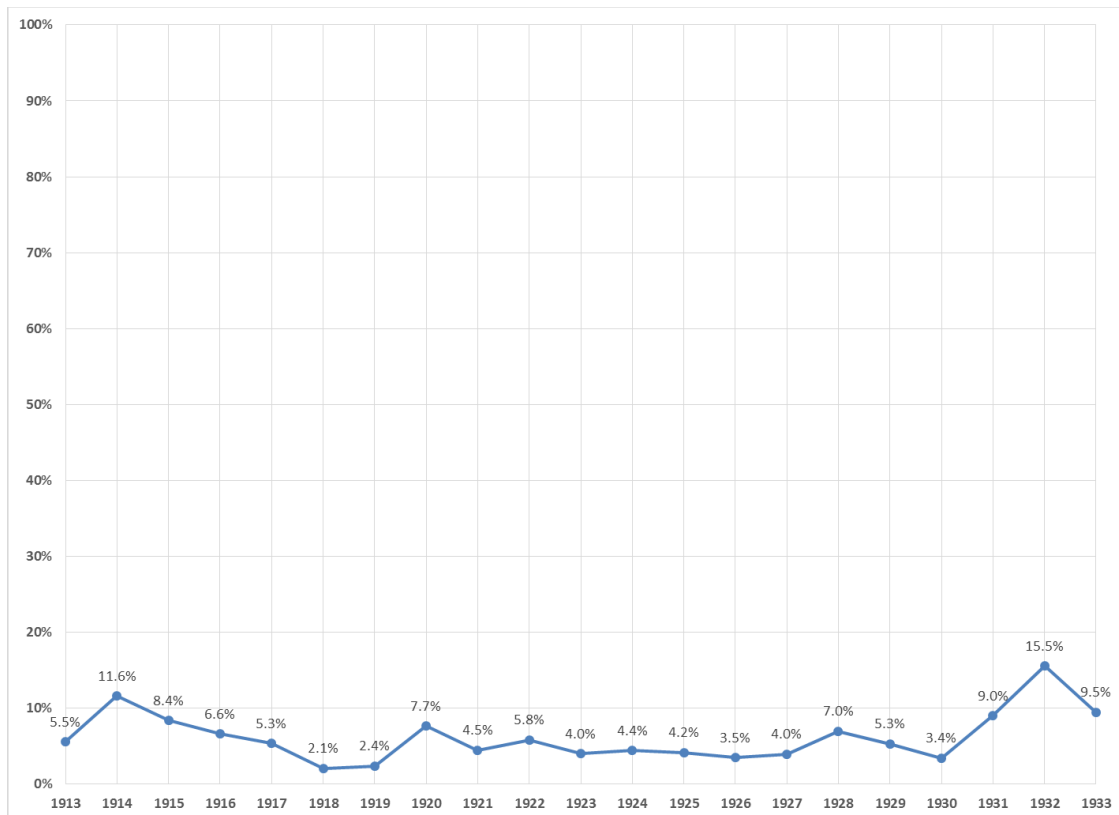


Figure 10 shows how the General Topic Economy & Business, aside from five years (1918, 1919, 1921, 1926 and 1930), was comparatively well-represented in *Le Droit*'s editorial page. It included editorials about: the benefits of agricultural work and living in rural settings; content promoting the participation of French-language people in industrial wage-labour or heading up

¹¹¹ The advent of WWI, the Russian Revolution, and the Winnipeg General Strike caused a spike in this type of editorial content at the end of the 1910s. The economic troubles of the Great Depression had the same effect as of 1929. The type of material in this General Topic includes: Unsigned, "Les Boys Scouts", 4/14/13, 1; Thomas Poulin, "Une Allemagne démocratisée", 9/5/17, 3; Charles Gautier, "Les élections Américaines", 11/3/20, 3; Charles Gautier, "Feu M. Charles Langlois", 2/19/24, 3; Charles Michaud, "Les rêves d'un américain", 12/20/26, 3; Henri Lessard, "L'importance du tramway", 6/8/2, 4; and Charles Gautier, "La Russie et le Japon", 3/5/32, 3.

business ventures; material advocating for the use of cooperative institutions including the Caisses Populaires Desjardins; pieces about the negative impacts of commercial organizations such as business trusts; and editorials focused on mining, forestry, and hydro-electric industries.¹¹²

Figure 10: General Topic Economy & Business



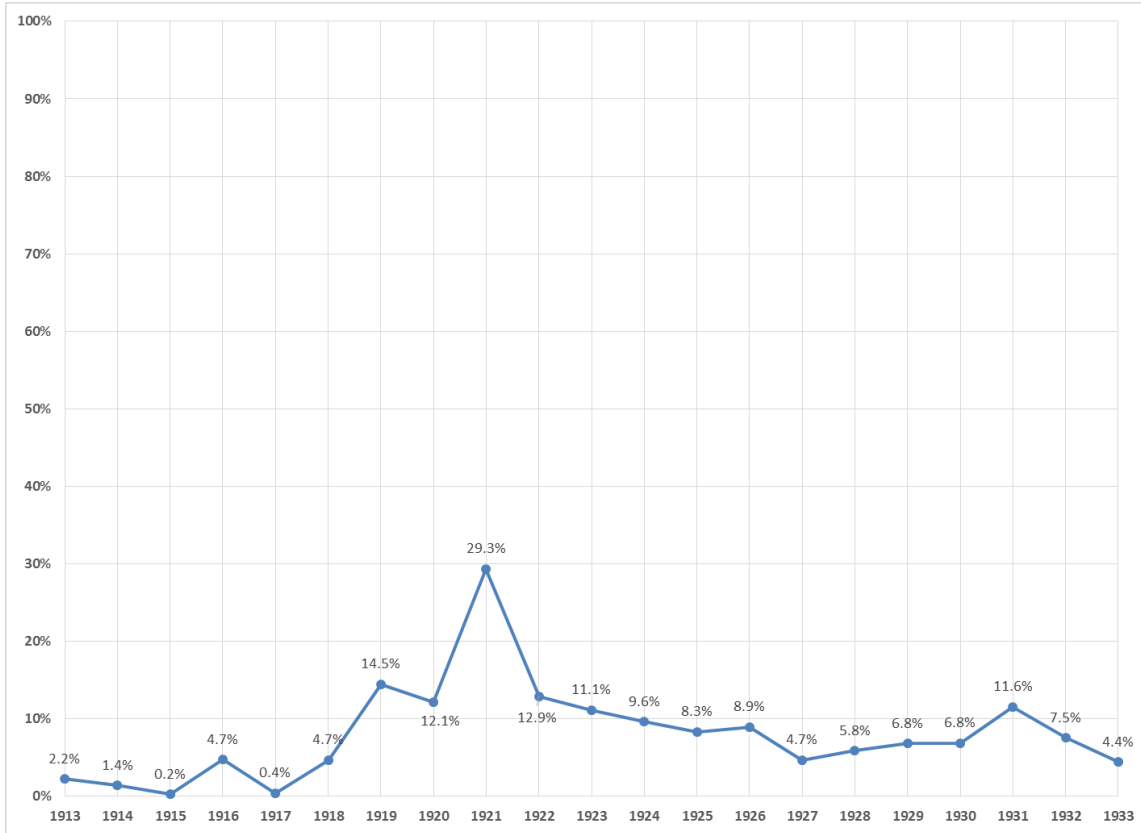
Opinion pieces about this theme represented, on average, close to ten percent of the overall content in the newspaper's editorial page. Changing economic circumstances naturally prompted the organ to publish more content on this theme. The post-WWI recession and the severe economic slump which began with October 1929's Stock Market Crash are the two most notable

¹¹² This material includes: Jean Suy du Colon, "Pour la colonisation", 4/28/14, 1; Thomas Poulin, "Vers les terres neuves", 5/30/17, 3; Charles Gautier, "Le mépris du français", 10/15/21, 3; Charles Michaud, "Industrie et agriculture", 7/23/25, 3; Henri Lessard, "La journée industrielle", 12/1/30, 4; and Léopold Richer, "Nous ne produisons pas suffisamment de beurre", 9/19/32, 4.

examples. In both cases, *Le Droit* offered opinion pieces exploring the causes of the downturns, what could be done to remedy the situation, and how people could cope with the difficult conditions. Material from the General Topic Labour Relations appeared slightly less frequently than content from the General Topic Economy & Business. This content focused on: relations between the working class and industrialists; the plague of corrupt business practices; the rise of the labour movement and the increasing use of strike actions; as well as the spread of socialism and communism.¹¹³ A small fraction of this content was published to 1919, representing roughly three percent of editorial content. As shown in Figure 11, the organ increased the proportion of material about this topic over the next five years. This increase reflected the emergence of organized labour in Canada at the end of the decade. The Russian Revolution and the Winnipeg General Strike also spurred *Le Droit* to publish more editorial content about socialism and communism.

¹¹³ This material includes: Unsigned, “Un rêve socialiste”, 4/22/13, 1; Thomas Poulin, “Les grèves”, 8/14/18, 3; Charles Gautier, “Les syndicats catholiques en pays mixtes”, 10/29/20, 3; Henri Lessard, “Le salaire suffisant”, 10/5/25, 4; and Charles Gautier, “Le communisme à Montréal”, 3/2/32, 3.

Figure 11: General Topic Labour Relations

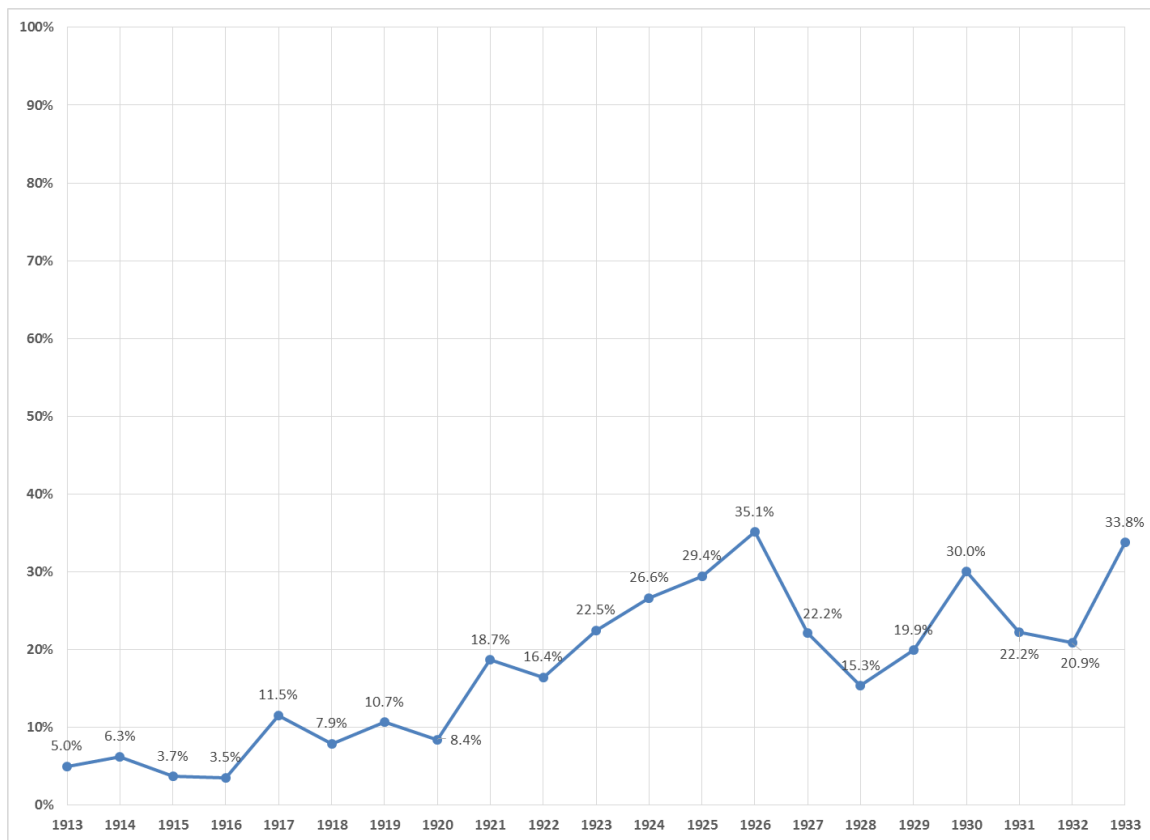


Although this type of material received less attention from that point onward, the General Topic Labour Relations continued to represent between 4.7% and 9.6% of the overall editorial content to 1930. The advent of the Great Depression caused the editorialists to increase the attention they paid to this theme.

The General Topic Politics, following a few years of inattention, gained significant traction after 1916. Editorials in this theme focused on political happenings at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels, encouraged political participation, and advocated for equitable political representation of French-speaking people in all branches of government across political

systems.¹¹⁴ During the 1913-1916 period, opinion pieces about politics represented about 5% of the organ’s editorial material. As revealed in Figure 12, 1917 was a watershed mark for this subject as it began its steady comparative increase. It would climb to a high of 35.1% in 1926.¹¹⁵

Figure 12: General Topic Politics



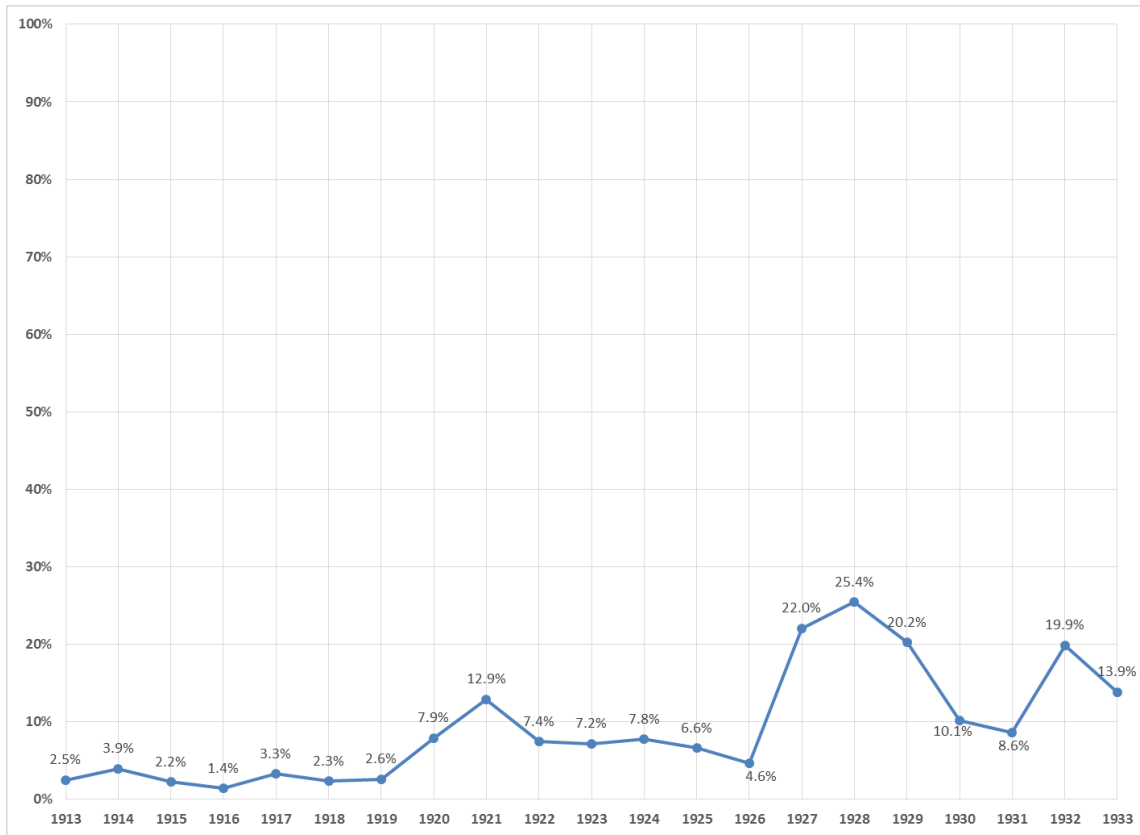
The General Topic Politics averaged nearly 18% from 1913 to 1933. The General Topic Public Policies, which included editorials about tariffs, taxation, immigration levels, and government intervention in commerce, as well as its role in providing healthcare and social services,

¹¹⁴ This material includes: Unsigned, “Qualifications des candidats”, 12/11/13, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “Il faut voter lundi”, 1/5/18, 3; Charles Gautier, “Coalition libérale-progressiste ou libérale-conservatrice ?”, 10/24/22, 3; Charles Gautier, “M. Bennett dans Québec”, 6/28/28, 3; and Camille L’Heureux, “Reformes municipales”, 7/4/32, 3.

¹¹⁵ As can be expected, more content was written about this topic during and directly following Ontario provincial (1914, 1919, 1923, 1926, and 1929) and federal elections (1917, 1921, 1925, 1926, and 1930).

followed a similar path.¹¹⁶ Figure 13 shows that during the first seven years *Le Droit* was in print, it published relatively few editorials about public policy matters.

Figure 13: General Topic Public Policies



However, this subject gained significant proportional importance starting in 1920. Its increase occurred in two phases: First, it remained above the seven percent mark from 1920 to 1924 and, then, from 1927 to 1933, it surpassed 13% five times, reaching as high as 25.4% in 1928. The category tripled in comparative editorial importance across the two decades under study. The findings about the General Topics Politics and Public Policies show that, following its initial five years, *Le Droit* dedicated an increasingly considerable proportion of its editorial content to these

¹¹⁶ This material includes: Jean Bernard, “Les denrées montent”, 10/31/14, 1; Thomas Poulin, “L’économie des vivres”, 9/11/18, 3; Charles Gautier, “Les ouvriers et l’immigration”, 2/20/24, 3; Charles Gautier, “Chômage et émigration”, 2/22/28, 3; and Léopold Richer, “À quand une commission de l’industrie laitière ?”, 7/14/33, 4.

categories. In fact, by the late 1920s these topics intermittently displaced the General Topic Religion and Language as the most common subject presented in the editorial pages. (See Appendix C: General Topics per Year by Percentage and Appendix D: General Topics per Year by Rank) Taken together they represented nearly half of the editorial content in the newspaper to 1933. The displacement of the General Topic Religion and Language by the General Topics Politics and Public Policies points to the fact that as the crisis over Regulation 17 seemed to be waning in the early 1920s, *Le Droit* was shifting its editorial approach. Reducing the share of content about this matter appears to reflect that it was on board with those who preferred a moderate “bonne entente” approach to convincing the government not to implement this policy. Financial pressures, which had caused the newspaper to adopt commercial newspaper tactics, also played a hand in promoting the diversification of its editorial content. These factors converged with the organ’s new strategy to encourage the survival Franco-Ontarians. It was at this time that the newspaper reduced the share of reactive editorials defending the minority from attacks against its rights. Instead it printed more and more pieces that instructed French-speaking Ontarians to build their wealth and their capacity in order to prevent the erosion of their rights.

Le Droit’s role in provincial politics

The previous sections exposed why and how *Le Droit* transformed its style, modified its content, and abandoned its Ontario-centric focus. Financial pressures prompted it to reach out to readers on the north shore of the Ottawa River, downplay its ideological organ approach, diversify its editorial content, and adopt some commercial newspaper practices. Archival materials show that *Le Droit*’s administrators also transgressed their initial promise to avoid playing a role in political affairs and to remain politically neutral. What emerges from the

analysis of these documents is a clear pattern of direct involvement by the administrators in the electoral political arena for most of the 1913 to 1933 period. The complex issue of whether to use *Le Droit* to influence politics first surfaced as Ontarians prepared for the October 20, 1919 provincial election. Its Office of Directors adopted a motion just ahead of the election campaign instituting a policy of impartiality.¹¹⁷ This motion explicitly mentioned “...que le journal n’appuie le candidat d’aucun parti, pour aucune considération, dans les prochaines élections.”¹¹⁸ *Le Droit*’s dedication to political impartiality was apparently short-lived as those at the organ revisited their policy at the very next meeting on August 25. The minutes from this gathering indicate that *Le Droit*’s overseers wanted some discretion to support candidates in the run-up to the vote. A new motion was passed to forward the previous meeting’s policy about the newspaper’s intended impartiality to the Editorial Board and Editor-in-Chief with the caveat that “...s’il est nécessaire d’appuyer une candidature, les directeurs devront être réunis.”¹¹⁹ This motion ostensibly opened the door for *Le Droit* to throw its support behind any candidate.

This policy change reflected the fact that those at *Le Droit* saw that influencing the election campaign was crucial in defending the rights of the province’s French-speaking minority. Resorting to this line of attack was explicit in a letter Father Charlebois sent to Father J.A. l’Écuyer of North Bay when the campaign got under way. The daily’s Censorship Director noted in this missive “(i)nutile pour moi d’insister sur la nécessité d’essayer du moins à choisir les plus capables pour nous représenter à Toronto.”¹²⁰ He then asked his fellow cleric to see what could be done by those who controlled politics in the region to find a French-speaking candidate

¹¹⁷ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds *Le Droit* C71 : MCF 18-3 (1er Volume 1912-1922), 11/8/1919.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 25/8/1919.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

to challenge Henri Morel, the Conservative Party's incumbent.¹²¹ Although Morel was French-speaking, he was anathema because he represented the political party which had tabled Regulation 17. Charlebois voiced this sentiment quite clearly by noting to Father l'Écuyer "(t)u connais suffisamment le député de votre comté pour savoir qu'il ne possède pas les qualités nécessaires à un bon député."¹²² Finding a French-speaking candidate to steal the Nipissing seat from the Conservatives was imperative. Getting directly involved in this election by lobbying for a candidate to oppose the Conservative incumbent was justifiable as *Le Droit* wanted Ontario's French-speaking Catholic population to have as many allies at Queen's Park as possible. A critical mass of Members of Parliament to oppose the Conservatives was necessary to block Regulation 17.

The lengths the newspaper would go to influence the outcome of that particular election is evident in another correspondence from Father Charlebois, written as the campaign was set to begin. In it, he negotiated with a United Farmers of Ontario (UFO) representative to regularly showcase the party's platform in *Le Droit*.¹²³ He closed his September 1 letter to Adélard Caron, the UFO candidate for the riding of Prescott, with the statement that, in order to ensure the greatest discretion in publishing material favourable to the UFO, "(j)e vous demanderais de signer les articles que vous publierez dans la page française du pseudonyme *Un fermier canadien français d'Ontario*."¹²⁴ The close ties between the organ and the United Farmers of Ontario is also evident in another letter Charlebois sent to Caron the same month. The cleric informed the

¹²¹ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477.C47L12 1033, 21/8/1919.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Father Charlebois explained in his September 1 letter to Joseph Adélard Caron the guidelines for submitting this material and that the editors had the discretion to abridge content or refuse to publish material outright. Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477.C47L3 59, 1/9/1919.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

UFO-hopeful that he had just been to Toronto to meet James J. Morrisson, the party's founder and current General Secretary. According to the priest, the two men discussed how the UFO would proceed in the event it formed the next government.¹²⁵ Morrisson apparently explained that it was his intention to follow a centrist platform should his party take power at Queen's Park. Caron also learned that the leader of the cooperative movement had assured the Oblate that he was prepared to form a coalition government with "(l)es meilleurs hommes des partis conservateur et libéral."¹²⁶

After election night the Censorship Director wasted little time expressing to others how he felt about Ernest Drury's UFO victory. The Oblate mentioned in almost identical letters sent on October 30 that the Association canadienne-française d'éducation d'Ontario (ACFÉO) was extremely pleased with the outcome of voting day since it had close ties with the new ruling administration.¹²⁷ He explained that a clandestine meeting to discuss policy matters had been held just a few days before between ACFÉO emissaries and UFO leaders. According to Charlebois, the envoys representing Ontario's French-speaking minority made it known that the ACFÉO could accept Regulation 17 if certain modifications were made.¹²⁸ Those at the UFO were reportedly quite interested in this plan and, as a consequence, the ACFÉO was preparing to submit a policy document outlining the revisions it would be willing to support.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477.C47L3 71, 7/10/1919.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477.C47L1 98, 30/10/1919 and Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477.C47L2 657, 30/10/1919.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

The close ties between *Le Droit* and the United Farmers of Ontario continued into the following year. Charlebois received a letter from Caron who, although he had lost his bid to represent the UFO for the riding of Prescott, remained a high level party insider. Caron told the priest that he had recently attended a gathering of UFO directors in Toronto. He explained how the proceedings had convinced him that the province's French-speaking minority needed to leverage the United Farmers as soon as possible to settle the bilingual schools question.¹³⁰ Caron also reported that he had spoken to the Cabinet at this gathering regarding the party's education and public schooling strategy.¹³¹ Charlebois learned that Caron had used this opportunity to mention what the ACFÉO was willing to accept in order to solve the language in school matter. The UFO insider mentioned that he had stated to the executive "(p)our le moment nous ne demandons pas de changer (le Règlement 17) je crois qu'une interprétation large et généreuse de la loi suffira."¹³² He closed this letter by asserting he was convinced the UFO was sensible, the Education Minister demonstrated sound judgment, and the spirit of reciprocity would lead to a fair and equitable solution to the language issue.¹³³

Le Droit's administrators continued their active engagement in political affairs after the United Farmers of Ontario's 1919 victory. In fact, they used the same approach in the next election lead-up which took place in the spring of 1923. This time around they interceded on behalf of the provincial Liberal Party. Specifically, Charlebois reached out to Dr. Raoul Hurtubise in a February 14 missive, in which he asked if he might represent the Grits in the

¹³⁰ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477.C47L3 80, 4/2/1920.

¹³¹ Caron was convinced that the UFO General Secretary, James J. Morrisson, was behind his nomination. Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

riding of Sudbury. The priest pleaded with Hurtubise to do so on behalf of all French-speaking people of Ontario. He played on his sense of loyalty by stating:

Je sais bien que vous n'avez jamais ambitionné cette lourde tâche, mais le temps est arrivé pour les canadiens-français dans Ontario d'élire des compatriotes dans tous les comtés où ils ont quelque chance de le faire. Les forces françaises doivent donner tout leur effectif aux prochaines élections. L'engagement décisif aura certainement lieu à la première session après les élections. Les meilleurs soldats doivent donc être sur la brèche. Vous en serez.¹³⁴

Charlebois was convinced that it was vital for the protection of the province's French-speaking population to have Hurtubise in the race. The eventual victory of the Conservative Party led the newspaper's administrators to consider how to best approach the Howard Ferguson-led government.¹³⁵ Senator Napoléon Belcourt, a leading member of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority, broached this topic in a letter to *Le Droit's* Censorship Director soon after the vote. In this missive he mentioned that he had held high-level policy discussions with Forbes Godfrey, the MPP for York West, as well as other influential members of the government party.¹³⁶ Belcourt also explained that they appreciated his proposal to solve the language impasse and were taking it to the Premier for consideration. The Senator then lauded the new Premier by stating "(s)avez vous que je crois que ce dernier se prépare à agir et semble disposé à nous rendre justice."¹³⁷ He seemed confident Ferguson would address the language issue in a manner that favoured the province's French-speaking minority. Belcourt asked Charlebois to ensure that, under the circumstances, nothing untoward would be done to precipitate a falling out with the Premier and the ruling Tories. He requested that all those involved in the fight to block

¹³⁴ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L8 604, 14/2/1923.

¹³⁵ The Conservatives captured 75 of the 111 provincial seats followed by the United Farmers of Ontario with 17, Liberals with 14, Labour with 4 and 1 independent.

¹³⁶ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L2 411, 8/11/1923.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Regulation 17 take a conciliatory approach towards the new government. Belcourt made this request by stating “(j)e vous prie de conseiller à tous nos gens de bien se garder de dire ou faire quoi que ce soit qui serait de nature à embarrasser (Ferguson) et son gouv(ernment).”¹³⁸ Belcourt believed using a “bonne entente” strategy was the best way to proceed. Those at *Le Droit* were expected to support this goodwill approach towards Ferguson’s Conservatives to avoid rankling their opponents.

The October 1929 Ontario general election brought more of the same from *Le Droit*. This was the first provincial election since the Ferguson administration shelved Regulation 17 on the heels of Dr. Merchant’s report into bilingual schools.¹³⁹ Charlebois discussed with others at the organ the stance the newspaper would take in the upcoming campaign. The minutes of the September 9, 1929 Meeting of the Office of Directors noted that the cleric provided a detailed account of the daily’s opinion about specific candidates and parties.¹⁴⁰ It mentioned that Charlebois took the time to “(nommer) des candidats probables, avec quelques mots d’appréciation à leur égard et fait connaitre certains griefs, connus de l’Association d’éducation contre les employés supérieurs du gouvernement (Ferguson)...”¹⁴¹ Although the meeting closed without a final decision about what strategy to follow, the matter was revisited within a few weeks at a subsequent meeting. The minutes of the October 14, 1929 Meeting of the Office of Directors state that Charlebois mentioned how the organ was accepting content from all parties as it had chosen not to openly support or oppose any candidate or party.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Choquette, *La foi*, 131.

¹⁴⁰ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds *Le Droit* C71 : MCF 18-3 (2e Volume 1922-1938), 9/9/1929.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid., 14/10/1929.

Although *Le Droit* had adopted a policy of neutrality in the 1929 election, it did not recuse itself from provincial politics after the vote. Charlebois reached out to the President of La Sauvegarde, a mutual benefit society in Quebec, to see if he could run for the Liberal Party in the event that another election was called in the near future. The priest explained that the Grit riding association wanted Aurélien Bélanger, who had represented the district of Russell from 1923 to 1929, to run again.¹⁴³ His candidacy was, Charlebois argued, extremely important as his political acumen was desperately needed at Queen's Park to defend Franco-Ontarian rights.¹⁴⁴ His arguments must have proven effective as Bélanger carried the Liberal Party banner in the next election. This example of directly involving itself in provincial electoral politics reflected a longstanding pattern that archival materials allow us to trace back over 15 years.

Le Droit's involvement in federal politics

Le Droit was also involved in federal electoral politics in the period under study. However, exploring how it was involved in federal politics while it was influencing Ontario provincial politics reveals two differences. First, those at the newspaper became embroiled in the former much later than they did in provincial politics.¹⁴⁵ This difference makes sense as the province's French-speaking population had a lot more invested in the happenings at Queen's Park than it did in Ottawa. While federal politicians could certainly lend a hand in the fight to protect their language schooling rights, the final decision rested with the Legislative Assembly in Toronto. The second main difference is that *Le Droit's* overseers, contrary to how they worked with the United Farmers of Ontario, Liberal Party and Conservative Party at the provincial level, consistently supported only one national political party—the Liberal Party of Canada. The first

¹⁴³ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L9 501, 18/11/1931.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ According to the archival evidence, they only did so as of 1925.

indication of the enduring relationship between *Le Droit* and the federal Grits surfaced in a letter written by Charlebois in early 1925. He argued in this dispatch sent to a fellow Oblate from Ville-Marie, Quebec that the time had come for Pontiac's French-Canadians to elect one of their own as they were a majority in the riding. He then asked "(n)'y aurait-il pas moyen de jeter l'idée ici et là et dès maintenant, de la nécessité d'élire un canadien-français dans le comté de Pontiac ?"¹⁴⁶ Charlebois subsequently explained to his fellow cleric that all must be done to stop Frank Cahill from winning the Grit candidacy in a riding that was predominately French-speaking.¹⁴⁷

Charlebois used his influence to bolster the Liberal Party cause as voting day neared. For example, a letter he wrote to Monsignor Francois-Xavier Ross, Bishop of Gaspé, explained how "(l)es bons journaux réclament un choix sage des candidats pour le plus grand bien du pays (aux élections fédérales)."¹⁴⁸ *Le Droit*'s Censorship Director made the case for supporting Rodolphe Lemieux who was the Gaspé riding's Grit candidate. He asserted that Lemieux's victory was crucial as he had taken a leadership role in defending the Ontario French-speaking population's rights:

Les Franco-ontariens fondent sur lui, et sur la charge qui lui donne un prestige incontestable, les plus grandes espérances, ici au Canada et en dehors du Canada. Nous considérons que sa défaite reculerait indéfiniment la solution de nombreuses questions des plus importantes.¹⁴⁹

Charlebois eventually went so far as agreeing to have the newspaper directly support another Liberal Party candidate in the same campaign. In early October, he exchanged letters with a

¹⁴⁶ Frank S. Cahill was elected to represent the riding of Pontiac in 1917 and 1921. Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L2 832, 4/2/1925.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 C.47L18 245, 29/9/1925.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

fellow cleric from South Indian, Ontario, exploring how they could ensure Alfred Goulet would win the riding of Eastview for the federal Grits. The dispatches written by Charlebois and Father V.M. Pilon outline how the two, along with Senator Belcourt, agreed to use *Le Droit*'s printing equipment and staff to produce 500 flyers for distribution at a local meeting in support of Goulet's candidacy.¹⁵⁰

The election's outcome provides further insight into the close relationship between *Le Droit* and the Liberals. Case in point, Charlebois commiserated with a colleague from Cochrane about the fact that Joseph-Arthur Bradette had lost the Temiskaming North seat to Tory John Raymond O'Neil.¹⁵¹ The Oblate noted in a letter that it was imperative to prepare to fight O'Neil in the near future as another general election might be called within a few months.¹⁵² A series of letters from late December provides the most telling proof of the links between *Le Droit* and the governing Liberals. The first of these missives was sent by Charlebois to the newly-elected Prime Minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King. In this December 30 note, the priest thanked the Prime Minister for inviting him to dine with him but explained that he unfortunately would not be able to attend.¹⁵³ King's response the following day demonstrates that the two men had a very strong affinity for each other and that they walked in very similar social circles. The Prime Minister noted:

I was indeed sorry not to have the pleasure of enjoying your company at dinner at Laurier House. I had many friends here who were friends of yours, and who would have enjoyed with me the pleasure of your company. I think, too, you would have been much interested in the conference which we had during the afternoon, and particulars of which you will no doubt hear

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L12 767, 12/11/1925.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L 13.1, 30/12/1925.

from our friends.¹⁵⁴

King closed his December 31 dispatch by wishing Father Charlebois "...best wishes for the New Year. Among its pleasures I do hope to have an early opportunity of a good talk with yourself. With kindest regards and best of wishes. Believe me, yours very sincerely, WLMackenzie King."¹⁵⁵ The very cordial exchange, coming on the heels of the election where Charlebois used his influence to support the federal Grit cause, is evidence that the newspaper had transgressed its founding promise to remain independent in political matters.

Unfortunately for the Liberals, the 1926 King-Byng Affair plunged Canada into a second general election within twelve months of the Liberals taking power. In the late summer campaign *Le Droit* once again acted as a bulwark for King's forces. For example, Charlebois was in contact with J. A. S. Plouffe, a lawyer and Liberal organizer from Sudbury, who coordinated the election campaigns of candidates in the ridings of Nipissing, East Algoma and Temiscamingue South.¹⁵⁶ Plouffe sent a missive to the cleric on August 14 asking if he could arrange for Aurélien Bélanger to come to the Sudbury-region to stump for the local candidates.¹⁵⁷ Charlebois responded on August 19 by explaining "(j)'aurais bien aimé vous envoyer M. Bélanger immédiatement, mais M. Cardin lui a donné pour mission d'aller dans l'Essex. Il était parti quand votre lettre est arrivée. M. Goulet me disait aujourd'hui qu'il l'attendait sous peu. Dès son arrivée je lui communiquerai votre invitation."¹⁵⁸ Although unable to fill the request, Charlebois offered to lend a hand by having *Le Droit* print content promoting the Liberal cause as well as party candidates in the region. He presented this option to Plouffe by stating:

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L16 356, 14/8/1926.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

Il serait peut-être bon que vous m'envoyiez chaque jour quelques bons rapports de la situation politique dans votre bout. Vous pourriez exposer dans ces rapports les principales raisons que les électeurs peuvent avoir pour choisir M. (Edmond) Lapierre (dans la circonscription de Nipissing) de préférence à tout autre.¹⁵⁹

An examination of the 1926 electoral campaign similarly provides insight into how *Le Droit* wielded its influence to keep Liberal Party candidates in line. This is demonstrated in the instance where Joseph Bradette, the candidate for Temiscamingue North, fell out of favour with his riding association because he courted the support of Irish and Knights of Columbus voters.¹⁶⁰ Cochrane cleric Joseph Larocque reacted by sending Charlebois a confidential letter telling him about Bradette's unsavory tactic. He asked if *Le Droit* could forgo printing anything in favour of the Grit candidate for the remainder of the campaign.¹⁶¹ The newspaper's Censorship Director responded by noting how he had been informed that Bradette was preparing to visit Pontiac to stump on behalf of Frank Cahill, another Liberal Party candidate. Charlebois mentioned that someone needed to tell Bradette he would face stiff retribution in the newspaper's columns if he chose to support the English-speaking Irish Cahill. Although *Le Droit* was predisposed in favour of the Liberal Party, its primary allegiance was to support Ontario's French-speaking population. In this case, the organ decided to sacrifice Bradette's election because he had put the party ahead of French-speaking interests.

The election resulted in a strong Liberal majority which provided an opportunity for Ontario's French-speaking minority an opportunity to cash in on the work they had done to help King's forces. This issue came up when its leaders heard a rumor that the new federal Cabinet

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L12 772, 28/8/1926.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

might not include a Franco-Ontarian. Being left out of the government's executive distressed those who had used their resources and influence to support the Grits. Joseph Edmond Cloutier, Secretary of the ACFÉO as well as a member of *Le Droit*'s executive, penned a letter to the Prime Minister-elect arguing that the province's French-speaking population deserved to be at the Cabinet table. Cloutier noted that six French-speaking Liberals had been elected in the province and Franco-Ontarian votes had, in his mind, helped elect English-language Liberals in Algoma-East, Ottawa, Kent, Stormont, Glengarry, Temiscamingue South, and Rainy River.¹⁶² Cloutier then mentioned that *Le Droit*'s influence in these matters should convince King to assign a ministerial portfolio to one of his French-speaking Members of Parliament from Ontario. He drew King's attention to this point by explaining:

Nous ne pouvons pas passer sous le silence la campagne du « droit », journal des Franco-ontariens, indépendant, qui cette année, à cause des questions considérables en jeu, s'est déclaré en faveur du parti libéral qu'il considérait comme le parti le plus susceptible de sauvegarder les prérogatives du gouvernement responsable. Cette campagne a été suivie et admirée par un nombre considérable d'électeurs des comtés où se trouve nos (sic) compatriotes dans Ontario comme dans les comtés limitrophes de la province de Québec. Cette attitude du « droit » n'a pas peu contribué à influencer le vote.¹⁶³

King did not, however, see fit to include a French-speaking Member of Parliament from Ontario in his Cabinet. The lack of representation in the 14th Ministry did not seem to affect the ties between *Le Droit* and the federal Liberals. The newspaper used its customary pro-Liberal approach heading into the 1930 federal election. The organ's machinations on behalf of King's forces prior to the July 28 vote began in early March. Charlebois sent a letter to Omer Héroux,

¹⁶² It is unclear if the Prime Minister ever received this letter as the copy held by the Oblates archives includes a hand written note on the cover page stating "Cette lettre n'a pas été remise". It is nevertheless very likely that this grievance was presented to him in another fashion. In the end what is important to retain is the fact that the message captured the essence of the relationship between those at the newspaper and the Liberal Party. Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L13.1 3, 25/9/26.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

editor of Montreal's *Le Devoir*, about federal political matters. According to the cleric, R. B. Bennett, the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, planned to focus his electoral campaign "...contre le Québec, les Canadiens français (sic) et la religion catholique."¹⁶⁴ He was convinced that it was necessary to publicly air this strategy before Bennett's campaign launched.¹⁶⁵ Pre-emptively disclosing this tactic in *Le Droit* and *Le Devoir* would hopefully up-end the Tories heading into the election and, consequently, greatly benefit the Liberal forces.

The Tory victory did little to convince *Le Droit* to taper its association with the Liberal Party. For instance, Goulet received a letter dated August 5, 1930 from Charlebois congratulating him for winning the riding of Russell on behalf of the Liberal banner.¹⁶⁶ The cleric invited the Member of Parliament to visit him at his office the next time he found himself in Ottawa.¹⁶⁷ A letter crafted by Charlebois just over one year after Bennett became Prime Minister further illustrates the organ's unwavering support for the Liberals. The priest explained to Senator Belcourt that *Le Droit* had recently mentioned his work in the Upper Chamber.¹⁶⁸ He further explained that, since they did not have enough room to do it justice the first time, a comprehensive account would be printed in an upcoming Saturday edition.¹⁶⁹ This offer is the last in a long line of evidence showing that *Le Droit* had a very close relationship with the Liberal Party of Canada. This connection certainly influenced how the newspaper treated the Grits, and their enemies, over a ten-year period.

¹⁶⁴ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L8 450, 12/3/1930.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L7 306, 5/8/1930.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L2 562 ex.1, 27/8/1931.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

Concerns over *Le Droit*'s interference in federal politics

Le Droit's involvement in political affairs placed some of those connected to it who also worked for the federal government in a very compromising position. For instance, Esdras Terrien, Director of the Syndicat d'œuvres sociales limitée, noted to the Offices of Directors that the newspaper's failure to stay out of the political fray was threatening his position in the federal civil service.¹⁷⁰ Terrien stated that he had only accepted the invitation to head the organization because he believed *Le Droit* "...avait un programme le détachant tout à fait des partis politiques, et je ne prévoyais pas que les développements de la lutte bilingue puissent l'amener si tôt à critiquer, sans esprit de partisan bien entendu, les actes du gouvernement (Conservateur) fédéral, donc je suis un employé."¹⁷¹ Terrien mentioned that an editorial from the previous day had, aside from taking the Borden government and four of its Ministers to task for refusing to disavow a piece of legislation, accused the Tories of persecuting the province's French-speaking population along the same lines as Ontario's Conservative Party.¹⁷² Terrien went on to say that these accusations undermined his ability to continue working for the Syndicat while retaining his employment with the civil service. He closed his letter by submitting his resignation.¹⁷³

Terrien was not the only member of the Syndicat's staff to be impacted by the newspaper's encroachment in federal politics. The organization received the resignation from its Secretary, Joseph Saint-Germain, at just about the same time. He explained:

Comme je suis un employé du service civil fédéral, il m'est presque impossible maintenant de rester plus longtemps le secrétaire de votre Comité de direction, surtout depuis la

¹⁷⁰ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds *Le Droit* C71 : MCF 18-5 (Syndicats d'œuvres sociales limitées), 5/5/1916.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Terrien eventually withdrew his resignation. Ibid.

récente attitude du journal « *Le Droit* » au sujet de l'Hon.
T(homas) C(hase) Casgrain, mon ministre.¹⁷⁴

The daily's attacks against the Conservative government and, specifically, its Postmaster General, Saint-Germain felt left him little recourse but to step down from the Syndicat to protect his employment. The matter was eventually settled without Saint-Germain leaving. However, this was only short-lived as he submitted a new letter of resignation to the Office of Directors in the fall of 1917. He was much more candid in this communication about what had compelled him to resign. He explained that he had no choice but to submit his resignation because a high-ranking official in his department told him he needed to choose between his employment and his affiliation with *Le Droit*.¹⁷⁵ Saint-Germain elaborated that it was probably the best time to step down as the newspaper would very likely increase its attacks on the Conservatives in the upcoming election campaign.¹⁷⁶ The Syndicat's overseers replied saying they were surprised by the pressure Saint-Germain had been put under due to the organ's stance against the Tories. Nevertheless, they were sympathetic to his motivations and accepted his resignation.¹⁷⁷

Le Droit's criticism of the Conservative Party and support for the Grits were also points of contention for many of its readers. For instance, Father Honorius Chabot from Maniwaki, Quebec, sent a letter to Charlebois in the summer of 1925 warning the Censorship Director about his organ's unreasonable conduct. The former argued that his parishioners who supported the Tories were very unhappy with how the newspaper unabashedly cheered the Liberal Party while

¹⁷⁴ Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds *Le Droit* C71 : MCF 18-5 (Syndicats d'œuvres sociales limitées), 12/5/1916.

¹⁷⁵ Pierre Édouard Blondin was Canada's Postmaster General at this time. He had replaced Thomas Chase Casgrain in January, 1917. Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds *Le Droit* C71 : MCF 18-5 (Syndicats d'œuvres sociales limitées), 8/10/1917.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 26/10/1917.

never saying anything positive about the Conservatives.¹⁷⁸ Chabot stated that a recent editorial unnecessarily blamed Arthur Meighen, the Conservative Party leader, for the difficulties the nation was facing. He argued that this latest opinion piece was leading many of his parishioners to consider cancelling their newspaper subscriptions.¹⁷⁹ He closed with a word of advice for the Censorship Director:

Je ne vous dis pas cela, parce que votre attitude me froisse dans mes opinions politiques, car je voudrais autant que vous voir battre les bleus à plate couture, mais je pense que vous êtes mieux ménager les opinions politiques pour garder l'emprise de votre journal sur tous les Canadiens français pour la cause des écoles.¹⁸⁰

Le Droit's overseers were undaunted by this letter. Charlebois answered that he had recently asked the Syndicat's directors what position the daily should take in the forthcoming federal election campaign. According to the priest, they had unanimously supported the idea of actively taking sides and "(i)l a été décidé en plus, tout en agissant prudemment, d'appuyer M. (William Lyon Mackenzie) King. À cause de son esprit anti-impérialiste, de sa largeur de vue, etc."¹⁸¹ This position, Charlebois noted, did not bother him even if it might ruffle the feathers of some who purchased *Le Droit*, even its most influential readers. The newspaper's Censorship Director finished by saying "Mais que voulez-vous... On ne peut pas plaire à tout le monde !"¹⁸²

Recriminations about the newspaper's treatment of the Conservative Party continued after the 1925 election. The organ received a letter from J. A. Deschênes in July, 1926 announcing his subscription cancellation because he no longer wanted to support a newspaper

¹⁷⁸ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L3 167, 27/8/1925.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L3 168, 1/9/1925.

¹⁸² Ibid.

“...aux tendances, aux inclinations impartialement toujours rouges (his emphasis).”¹⁸³ Deschènes argued that the way *Le Droit* favoured King over Meighen showed it was not at all impartial.¹⁸⁴ *Le Droit* sent Deschènes a letter a few days later to respond to his accusations. Charlebois argued that his newspaper was simply taking a position on political matters but that it remained free of any political influence. The latter was evident, he stated, as it had recently congratulated Meighen for having invited a French-speaking Member of Parliament to his executive and, conversely, oftentimes reprimanded the King Cabinet for some of its decisions.¹⁸⁵ It is interesting to note that Father Charlebois used the same arguments in a letter dated the same day to Father Joseph Gagnon, from the parish of St. Gervais in Quebec. The latter had accused *Le Droit* of having become “rouge forcené (his emphasis).”¹⁸⁶ The Censorship Director restated the comments he had used to counter Deschènes’s accusations and noted he hoped his explanations would convince his fellow cleric that, although *Le Droit* shared opinions on political matters of interest to the public, it remained impartial and independent in doing so.¹⁸⁷

The intensity of accusations *Le Droit* faced about what some believed was inappropriate conduct did not abate as the decade wore on. Tancred St. Pierre submitted a letter to the newspaper in September, 1926 asking for it to be published in the organ’s “Tribune Libre” section. The Windsorite opened his piece by arguing that the recent “Campagnes de préjugés” editorial had convinced him “...que le “*Droit*” n’est plus l’organe indépendant des Canadiens-Français de l’Ontario.”¹⁸⁸ He then provided ten instances which he believed showed the

¹⁸³ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L4 104, 22/7/1926.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L4 105, 6/8/1926.

¹⁸⁶ These two letters, aside from five sentences, are identical in prose and arguments. Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L7.1 2, 6/8/1926.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L19 286, 7/9/1926.

broadsheet reprimanded Tory politicians for behaving in the same manner as representatives of the Liberal Party of Canada.¹⁸⁹ In his mind, it was reprehensible that a supposedly neutral newspaper failed to recognize its apparent double-standard. St. Pierre believed the newspaper's inappropriate ties to the federal Grits underscored its public bias.¹⁹⁰ *Le Droit* responded the following week by explaining that it would not to publish his letter “(p)our la bonne raison que vous ne vous contentez pas de faire un exposé de votre point de vue, mais que vous faisiez à notre endroit une assertion que nous ne pouvions pas publier sans nous condamner nous-mêmes.”¹⁹¹ It was further stated that *Le Droit*, although it voiced its opinion on political matters, remained an independent newspaper above the influence of any party.¹⁹²

It would appear that St. Pierre's accusations were shared by others in the Windsor region. A couple of years later, the newspaper sent a pre-emptive letter to Dr. Raymond Morand, a dentist from Windsor who was the former Tory Member of Parliament for Essex County, as it had learned he was unhappy with the daily's conduct. It was mentioned in the correspondence that the newspaper did not hold any ill will toward him and remained committed to acting freely. Charlebois argued that this commitment was evident in the fact that it had oftentimes taken the Liberal Party to task for its immigration policy. *Le Droit* had, he noted, similarly criticized the Grits for not ensuring that a fair number of federal civil servant positions went to the province's French-speaking minority.¹⁹³ This pre-emptive letter was clearly an attempt at damage control.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L19 288, 15/9/1926.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 2477 .C47L13 259, 16/11/1928.

At least one of *Le Droit*'s readers disagreed with how the newspaper supported the federal Liberal Party in the 1930 election. Father Alphonse Corriveau of Hallexwood, Ontario, sent a letter to the organ's editorial staff accusing it of blatantly favouring the federal Grits.¹⁹⁴ Gabriel Sarrazin, *Le Droit*'s Assistant Director, sent a response answering this accusation. He noted that Corriveau was correct in asserting that the newspaper ignored Bennett's campaign in the election run-off. He explained matter of factly that "(n)ous ne prenons pas cette attitude par esprit de parti, mais parce que nous croyons qu'elle est conforme aux intérêts de tous les nôtres."¹⁹⁵ This latest effort came on the heels of a string of indictments by readers that the newspaper's actions on the federal stage were in no way influenced by a predisposition to a party in particular.

Conclusion

The previous information detailed the initial aims of those who took the lead in launching an Ontario-centric organ to fight Regulation 17 and defend the minority rights of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic population. As was outlined, the lay and clerical leaders who oversaw what eventually became *Le Droit* had a clear vision of the type of battle organ they wanted to offer. Archival content, the prospectus letter sent out before it hit newsstand, and the newspaper's inaugural edition outline their intention to publish an organ with a dual mandate of protecting Franco-Ontarians and promoting social Catholicism while remaining independent of political actors. Previous explorations about *Le Droit*'s early years assert that it stayed true to these founding precepts. However, a content analysis of the newspaper's editorials shows that what was published was increasingly different from what was originally laid out. More specifically, the "anniversary edition" and "special editorials" that appeared in the twenty years following the broadsheet's launch decreasingly touched upon the issues that were central to its

¹⁹⁴ Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, Ontario. Fonds Charles-Charlebois HEB 244 .C47L19 408, 24/6/1930.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

founding mission. A statistical analysis of the period's editorials confirms the fact that less and less of this content focused on fulfilling its original dual mandate. The addition of an editorial section for readers in Quebec is another sign that it strayed from its original intentions.

Scrutinizing *Le Droit*'s administrative records and related archival materials similarly challenges the early claim that it would carry out its mission while remaining political impartial and avoiding interfering in the political arena. These findings provide a view about the organ's early years that is more complex and nuanced than previously offered. The evidence shows that, unlike interpretations which have argued that *Le Droit* wholeheartedly remained true to its founding intentions, it progressively offered readers much more varied content about very wide-ranging themes. Although it did not wholeheartedly discontinue its campaign to protect Franco-Ontarians from assimilation and the promotions of social Catholicism, the diversification of its material made them less and less a focal point of its content. This conversion began the process which eventually saw *Le Droit*'s change in the second half of the twentieth-century from an ideological organ to a daily for a mass audience.

CHAPTER THREE

Le Droit endorses respectable conduct

Ottawa's Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate supported *Le Droit*'s launch and operations over its initial twenty years as it was an opportunity to promote social Catholicism while protecting the Franco-Ontarian community. Father Charlebois's role as Censorship Director ensured the organ's opinion pieces, while predominately about fighting Regulation 17, included a significant share of content that sponsored values and ideals in line with this ideology.

¹ A good proportion of this material focused on encouraging respectable conduct which was very common in "bonne presse" organs at the time.² These editorials are part of the General Topic Values & Ideals which includes the Subheadings Morality, Use of Income, and Temperance/Prohibition. In certain cases the Oblate-controlled editorial staff linked the social beliefs it promoted with *Le Droit*'s other core mandate, safeguarding Ontario's French-language Catholic minority against assimilation. In short, the weekly's editorials occasionally argued that following Catholic dictums would protect the group from the province's majority English-speaking Protestant population. This approach typically involved practices *Le Droit* believed could enhance the French-speaking Catholic group's influence beyond its demographic strength. The ability to gain clout over-and-above its limited demographic representation would provide needed leverage to lobby provincial authorities to protect its minority language and religious rights.

¹ Charles Curran's *Catholic Social Teaching: 1891-present* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2002) provides a detailed review of this matter along with other cornerstones of social Catholicism. *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* (New York: Orbis Books, 1992) by David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon prove likewise invaluable.

² Richard Jones's exploration of *L'Action catholique* provides a specific case in point. Susan Mann's *Lionel Groulx et L'Action française : Le nationalisme Canadien-français dans les années 1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) explains why this type of content appeared in these ideological organs.

General Topic Values & Ideals—Subheading Morality

The previous chapter's comparative overview of *Le Droit*'s editorial content outlined the respective importance of ten core General Topics across its initial two decades. As was demonstrated, the General Topic Values & Ideals, although it was relatively prominent in the newspaper's early years, became less and less important from then on.³ One could certainly expect an Oblate-controlled organ to publish a fair proportion of editorials about this topic. This was especially understandable as society in the early twentieth-century experienced significant changes. The intensification of urbanization and industrialization, the emergence of mass media, as well as the rise of populist and labour movements, were only a few elements that promoted broad-sweeping socio-economic transformations. *Le Droit* used its editorial page to air its opinions about the factors that prompted these changes and how readers could contend with the new conditions. The General Topic Values & Ideals middle ranking—generally fourth or fifth overall—during *Le Droit*'s initial years reflected this priority. Yet, by the early 1920s it lost its comparative standing partially because the daily diversified its format to attract more readers. (See Appendix C: General Topics per Year by Percentage and Appendix D: General Topics per Year by Rank) According to Chapter One, toning down the promotion of social Catholicism was part of the process which saw *Le Droit* move from its initial orthodox religious organ approach towards that of a mainstream commercial newspaper.

A closer examination of the distribution of the four Subheadings within the General Topic Values & Ideals shows that editorials about Morality garnered the most attention. This Subheading consistently ranked first or second throughout both decades. (See Appendix E:

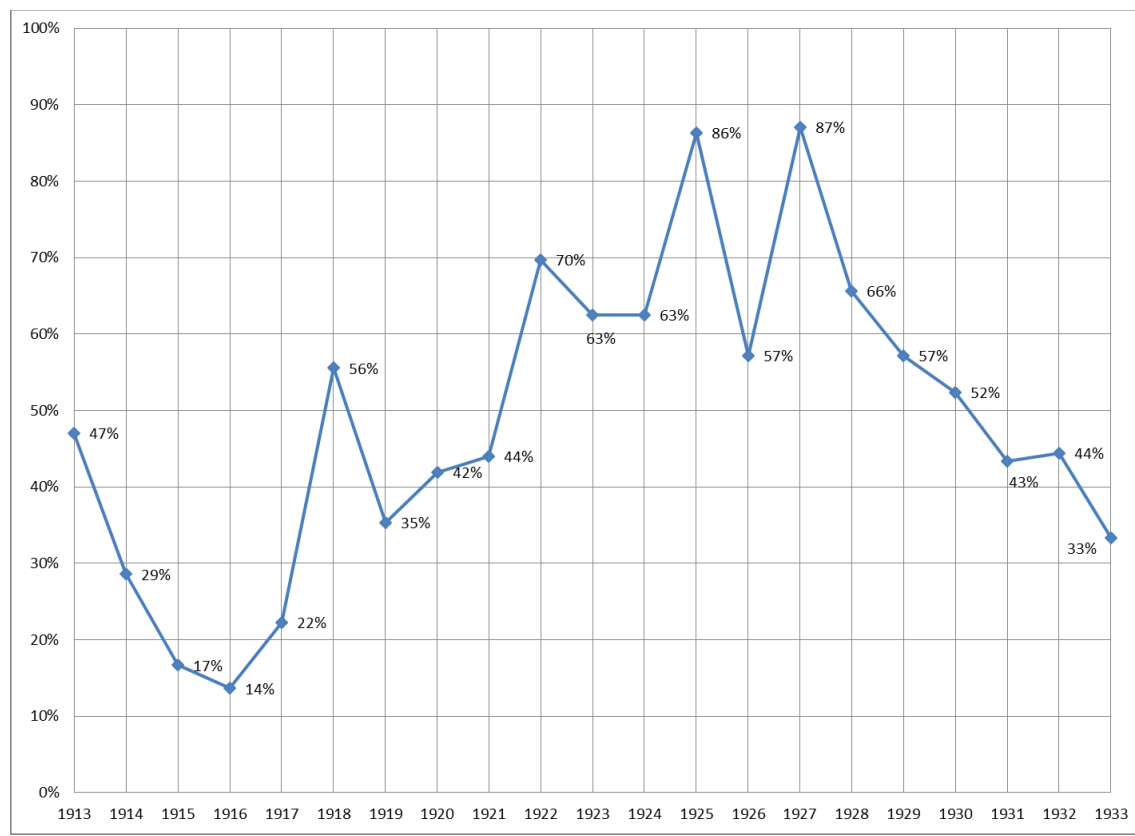
³ The editorial content regrouped under the General Topic Values & Ideals totals 449 items. On a yearly basis, it represented between four and five percent of the overall opinion pieces. See Appendix C: General Topics per Year by Percentage.

General Topic Values & Ideals and its Subheadings per Year) The 234 editorials from this grouping touched upon behaviors *Le Droit* was convinced underscored a stable, wholesome and prosperous community.⁴ It is noteworthy to mention that the early 1920s decision to expand the organ's editorial content helped keep the Subheading Morality at the top of the General Topic Values & Ideals. *Le Droit*, as was explained in Chapter One, added an editorial section on page four to cater to readers in Quebec. Henri Lessard would ultimately be the main contributor of this content.⁵ He was especially interested in leisure and conduct issues. Figure 14 shows how Lessard's contribution as of early 1922 increased the relative importance of the Subheading Morality compared to other subjects in the General Topic Values & Ideals.

⁴ Viewpoints on a myriad of topics were provided, including appropriate attire for women, men and children, the perils of drug use, the destructiveness of gambling and alcoholism, the dangers of viewing movies that are in poor taste and devoid of educational merit, as well as the importance of eschewing salacious reading materials of all sorts.

⁵ Henri Lessard was the leading contributor (82), followed by Charles Gautier (80), and Thomas Poulin (13).

**Figure 14: Editorial content in the General Topic Values & Ideals
from the Subheading Morality**



A not insignificant number of editorials in this grouping pertain to factors the newspaper believed were undermining the moral fiber of the community. Although several topics were mentioned in the twenty-five pieces, a few predominate. For instance, the rampant liberal and materialist American culture is mentioned in almost half of these editorials.⁶ The first such reference appeared in the November 20, 1914 editorial “Quelques Leçons d’Histoire”. This unsigned piece claimed that subversive ideas imported from the United States were partly to blame for the Mexican revolution. According to this editorial, the infiltration of liberalism

⁶ The United States was also blamed for spreading paganism and the fascination with the occult. The following opinion pieces present these arguments particularly forcefully: *Le Droit*, J. Albert Foisy, “Vers le paganisme”, 4/19/1918, 1; *Le Droit*, J. Albert Foisy, “Vers le paganisme”, 4/25/1918, 1; and *Le Droit*, Charles Gautier, “Le spiritisme”, 7/18/1922, 1. All newspaper citations for the remainder of this chapter will refer to *Le Droit*.

challenged Catholic precepts which underscored collective harmony and social stability.⁷

Readers were told to take note as events in Mexico could likewise occur in Canada. The editorial mentioned:

Les malheurs des catholiques mexicains, comme des catholiques portugais et français, suffiront-ils à nous ouvrir les yeux, à nous catholiques canadiens ? Suffiront-ils à faire cesser, surtout en Ontario, les divisions intestines et fratricides qui paralysent les meilleurs efforts et poussent un grand nombre de fidèles vers l'indifférence et l'apostasie ? Rappelons-nous bien que le Canada, comme le Mexique, est voisin des États-Unis, un jour, des spéculateurs jettera peut-être des yeux d'envie sur les immenses richesses naturelles de notre pays.⁸

The piece ended by calling for a campaign to apprise the province's Catholic minority of this imminent menace. A later editorial specified that mores and ideal from the United States threatened Canadian society. The 1920 editorial noted that it was dreadful how some English-language dailies in Canada featured subversive material originating in U.S. newspapers.⁹ Those in the domestic newsprint business who seemingly fomented an appetite for this sort of destabilizing content were especially dangerous:

Si la presse anglaise du Canada déplore le fait que le peuple canadien aime à lire les publications américaines, elle n'a qu'à faire son "mea culpa" car c'est elle qui, par sa vulgaire imitation et son servile copiage des journaux américains a donné ce goût au peuple.¹⁰

The case was then made that the government should act to stop immoral and destabilizing American newspaper content from being re-printed in Canada. This censorship would hopefully stop the country from following the same dangerous paths as the United States and Mexico.

⁷ Unsigned, "Quelques Leçons d'Histoire", 11/20/1914, 1.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ The editorial specifically mentioned content appearing in William Randolph Hearst's newspapers. 3/6/1920, 3.

¹⁰ J. Albert Foisy, "Pharisaïsme !", 3/6/1920, 3.

A set of opinion pieces that appeared later in the decade emphasized poor conditions in the United States to drive home the point that immorality was hurting American society. Three opinion pieces at the end of the 1920s and early 1930s from the Subheading Morality claimed that the increasing prevalence of materialism which undermined the collective fabric of a society was anchored in American ideals. The April 2, 1929 editorial “Une Grave Épidémie” about stock market speculation focused on this argument. It maintained that this increasingly pervasive practice reflected the American-inspired “get rich quick” approach to wealth building. Readers were warned about the effects of this attitude as “(d)ans cette course à la richesse, un grand nombre se trompent de train et au lieu de se rendre à la fortune ils vont à la misère, au lieu d’amasser des dollars ils accumulent des remords, des regrets et maintes choses indésirables.”¹¹ The same arguments were reiterated again in 1931 and 1932.¹² “La Criminalité aux États-Unis” and “Le bandeau de la justice” each stated that disproportionate crime rates in the U.S. reflected a country without a moral compass.¹³ These editorials were part of the organ’s crusade to lay blame for social deterioration at the feet of ideals incubated in the United States. Its readers were routinely warned of what happened when populations ascribed to immoral principles.

Content in the Subheading Morality also maintained that French-Canadian traditions preserved social harmony and decency.¹⁴ The editorialists oftentimes made this point by comparing Quebec’s crime rates to Ontario’s. This approach served to show how the former had enviable living conditions versus the latter. For instance, the January 28, 1916 editorial “Ce pauvre Québec” mentioned that crime, incarceration, and alcohol consumption rates were much

¹¹ Charles Michaud, “Une Grave Épidémie”, 4/2/1929, 3.

¹² Henri Lessard, “Pour l’ouvrier”, 5/19/1931, 4 and Charles Gautier, “Un cancer national”, 6/1/1932, 3.

¹³ Charles Gautier, “La Criminalité aux États-Unis”, 8/4/1923, 3 and “Le Bandeau de la justice”, 10/2/1924, 3.

¹⁴ This argument was presented in a total of eight editorials over the two decades under investigation. Most notably, Charles Gautier, “Nos souhaits”, 12/31/1920, 1 and Harry Bernard, “Bigoterie et fanatisme”, 2/2/1922, 1.

higher in Ontario than Quebec. The discrepancy, the newspaper argued, undermined the argument made by many that the French-speaking Catholic province was backward.¹⁵ This same tactic was used in editorials that appeared in 1918 and 1924.¹⁶ *Le Droit* revisited this comparative approach in 1925 by juxtaposing Quebec's crime rates to that of Canada's other provinces. In this case, an editorial appeared examining provincial statistics related to criminality—e.g. arrests, trials, guilty verdicts and incarcerations. The data, it was mentioned, clearly showed that social conditions were better in Quebec than anywhere else in Canada.¹⁷ The significantly higher rate increases experienced in all categories in the latter compared to the former should, the piece noted, be food for thought when considering the traits that underscored a peaceful and harmonious society. This material, like the previously mentioned content about the impact of American values, was expected to make the point that early twentieth century society was experiencing a sudden and, oftentimes, dangerous transformation resulting in difficult consequences. A segment of these editorials served to showcase factors the organ believed undermined stable, healthy and prosperous communities. Quebec was used as a foil in making the case that remaining true to traditional values and ideals avoided general social decay.

Aside from delving into dangerous social influences, the Subheading Morality contained much content on the appropriateness of various pastimes.¹⁸ While this material included fleeting commentary on numerous topics, a few issues received prolonged and recurring attention. The

¹⁵ A.N., "Ce pauvre Québec", 1/28/1916, 1.

¹⁶ J. Albert Foisy, "Supérieur dans les Crimes", 1/22/1918, 1 and Charles Gautier, "Ontario et les Statistiques Criminelles", 2/23/1924, 3.

¹⁷ Francis Schryburt, "La criminalité au Canada", 3/9/1925, 3.

¹⁸ The emergence of "leisure" time for the middle and lower classes was certainly something that was relatively new. Conditions prior to the mid- to late nineteenth-century limited the amount of time people had away from labouring or completing daily tasks. The advent of labour arrangements in an industrialised setting and new technologies that reduced the burden of housework freed up some hours people could spend relaxing and entertaining themselves. For more on this matter, see George Karlis, *Leisure and recreation in Canadian society: an introduction* (Toronto: Thompson Education Publishing, Inc., 2016).

top three topics of discussion were the Central Canada Exhibition held in Ottawa every summer, reading materials of all kinds, as well as motion pictures.¹⁹ In the case of the annual fair, *Le Droit* printed eight opinion pieces coinciding with the 11-day summertime event. These editorials consistently urged readers to visit the “Ex” for its instructional offerings about emerging and innovative agricultural or industrial practices. They were told to avoid wasting time at the midway and attending presentations with little educational value. One such editorial advocated for increasing the share of educational content in the context of post-World War I economic conditions. Providing wholesome learning opportunities at the fair was instrumental “...parce qu’il va nous falloir compter sur ce que nous fournira notre industrie pour travailler au rétablissement de notre équilibre économique.”²⁰ Subsequent editorials about the Central Canada Exhibition recurrently railed against its operators for offering less and less instructional content while increasing unsavoury attractions solely for amusement purposes.²¹ For instance, “La Semaine de l’Exposition” from September 9, 1924 argued:

L’exposition a, de plus, un caractère instructif qu’il ne faut pas perdre de vue. Elle est une leçon de choses vivante et précieuse, une miniature de toutes les branches de l’activité humaine... (mais) (l)es amusements sont un complément de toute exposition.²²

Le Droit later claimed that several local English-language newspapers were likewise concerned about the increasing prominence of non-instructive attractions and midway rides at the Central Ontario Exhibition.²³ “Pour le bien de l’Exposition” noted that Ottawa should emulate how Halifax recently dealt with this problem. The editorial hailed the Nova Scotian city for obliging

¹⁹ The Subheading Morality included 234 editorials with nearly one-hundred (96) from these two topics combined.

²⁰ Thomas Poulin, “L’Exposition”, 9/9/1918, 3.

²¹ Charles Gautier led the charge by writing five editorials imploring readers to let organizers and civic officials know that they valued instructive content: “Notre exposition”, 9/13/1921, 3; “L’exposition”, 9/11/1922, 3; “La semaine de l’Exposition”, 9/9/1924, 3; “Notre exposition annuelle”, 8/23/1927, 3; “Pour le bien de l’Exposition”, 8/31/1928, 3; and “L’Exposition centrale”, 8/17/1929, 3.

²² Charles Gautier, “La Semaine de l’Exposition”, 9/9/1924, 3.

²³ Ibid., “Pour le bien de l’Exposition”, 8/31/1928, 3.

fair organisers to provide entertaining options that had some wholesome qualities.²⁴ *Le Droit* also countered claims by exhibition organisers that financial needs forced them to increase the proportion of the fairgrounds dedicated to entertainment at the expense of educational attractions. “Un raisonnement typique” offered a solution to this hypothetical issue as it opened by mentioning that offering entertaining attractions was not necessarily the problem. The real issue lied in the fact that the type of entertainment found in this section of the fairground was increasingly immoral. All that was required, the organ was convinced, was for organisers to clean up the content so that those in attendance could be entertained without fearing offense.²⁵ Ensuring that entertaining options were virtuous and wholesome underscored the newspaper’s recurring campaign to force the Central Canada Exhibition to live up to its core mission of providing those in the Ottawa Valley an opportunity to use their free time in an instructional and wholesome manner.

While the Central Canada Exhibition garnered almost yearly attention from *Le Droit*’s editorial staff, the topic of reading for pleasure far surpassed it over the two decades. A drop in prices of various reading materials, the extension of lines of distribution combined with the spread of literacy at the end of the nineteenth-century led a larger proportion of the general population to “read for pleasure”.²⁶ The emergence of new “low culture” reading content—i.e. magazines, newspapers, and literature for mass audiences—also fueled the spread of this pastime. Forty-three editorials about this topic appeared from 1913 to 1933, with the greater

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Camille L’Heureux, “Un raisonnement typique”, 9/17/1928, 3.

²⁶ The first chapter of Mary Vipond’s *The Mass Media in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd. Publishers, 2000) explores some of the factors which contributed to newspapers becoming the first mass media.

majority published after 1925.²⁷ The first few focused on promoting respectable books penned by Canadian authors. For instance, one explained:

(l)a littérature canadienne, bien qu'à l'état embryonnaire, existe et ne demande qu'à se développer. Elle est cependant retardée dans sa marche en avant, par des causes nombreuses, dont la moindre n'est pas la grande apathie manifestée de toujours, par le public (canadien), à son endroit.²⁸

It was likewise noted a few years later that, instead of buying overpriced foreign reading material that contained immoral content, French-Canadians should purchase books from local writers who respected their sensibilities.²⁹ *Le Droit's* preoccupation with ensuring people have access to respectable literature ultimately led it to open its own bookstore in 1926. An editorial published on May 18 explained that this new venture served to offer "...des BONS (original emphasis) livres. Ils sont tous sévèrement choisis, même et peut-être encore plus les romans."³⁰ Providing ready access to virtuous reading materials underscored *Le Droit's* decision to launch this venture. Investing in a commercial enterprise under the guise of protecting readers from immoral reading materials demonstrates the extent to which those at the newspaper were committed to countering the spread of reading material believed to promote social decay.

Having its own bookstore was only one way *Le Droit* sought to stop people from reading scandalous content in their leisure time. The vigorous campaign its editors waged against sensationalistic newspapers was another way.³¹ The importance of this particular focus is evident

²⁷ Thirty-seven of these editorials appeared between 1925 and 1931.

²⁸ Harry Bernard, "La semaine du livre", 11/21/1921, 3.

²⁹ Charles Gautier, "La Semaine du livre canadien", 12/4/1924, 3.

³⁰ Henri Lessard, "Notre service de librairie", 5/18/1926, 4.

³¹ Although the daily also printed editorials criticizing content that appeared in magazines, it did so much less frequently. Only eight of these types of opinion pieces were printed from 1913 to 1933: Henri Lessard, "Contre la publicité malsaine", 12/29/22, 4; Fulgence Charpentier, "L'engluement américain", 10/1/1924, 3; Charles Gautier, "Protection morale", 3/19/1926, 3; Charles Gautier, "La responsabilité des journaux", 5/6/1926, 3; Charles Gautier,

when considering that 28 of the 36 editorials printed after 1922 about inappropriate reading materials fixated on the “yellow press”.³² The greater majority of these pieces argued that newspapers which sensationalise criminal activities and scandals were part and parcel of society’s moral degeneration. The first editorial disparaging yellow newspapers appeared on January 12, 1925. It applauded the Association des Voyageurs de commerce du Canada for adopting a motion at its Annual General Meeting demanding the government ban these types of publications from being produced in or entering Canada.³³

Le Droit oftentimes showcased the opinions of renowned clerics along with the Catholic Church’s stance on the matter to bolster its argument against the yellow press. A case in point was a piece penned by the Archbishop of Montreal, Louis Joseph Napoléon Paul Bruchési.³⁴ The cleric attacked the all-too-common practice of some newspapers of focusing on the most salacious details of criminal activities. Monsignor Bruchési argued that these minutiae only served to titillate “...la curiosité malsaine des lecteurs.”³⁵ He implored newspapers to publish the fewest amount of crime-related and scandal-based stories. If they felt that some of these stories needed to be told, then only the bare minimum should be mentioned about what transpired. Monsignor Bruchési explained:

Il n’est ni utile, ni convenable (que les comptes rendus)
prennent la plus grande et la meilleure place. Le crime
et l’homicide n’ont aucun droit à cet excès d’honneur.
Pourquoi persister à leur donner le pas sur des
événements d’ordre politique (sic), social (sic) ou

“Invasion américaine”, 4/8/1927, 3; Léopold Richer, “Magazines américains”, 1/28/1931, 3; Charles Gautier, “Cette augmentation de tarif”, 3/26/1931, 3; and Léopold Richer, “Les magazines sont prohibés”, 6/22/1931, 3.

³² The other editorials were about content that appeared in magazines and literature.

³³ Charles Gautier, “Un danger de l’heure”, 1/12/1925, 3.

³⁴ The daily re-printed an essay from Archbishop Bruchési pleading with the yellow press to change editorial practices. This letter was timely as Montreal had recently been home to several murders which the yellow newspapers had covered ad nauseam.

³⁵ Louis Joseph Napoléon Bruchési, “Les journaux et le crime”, 5/22/1925, 3.

religieux beaucoup plus dignes d'attention.³⁶

The second such editorial from the hand of a cleric appeared shortly thereafter on June 3. In this case *Le Droit* reprinted an opinion piece by Father François Goyer from the religious organ *Le Messager du Très Sacré Sacrement*. The priest argued in his essay that sensationalism in newspapers only served to corrupt peoples' minds and eroded wholesome family values. Goyer implored all those in the French-speaking Catholic community to "...s'interdit et interdit aux siens la lecture de ces funestes publications. Que tous les gens de bien protestent auprès des autorités chaque fois que ces organes portent atteinte à l'honneur des familles."³⁷ *Le Droit* published attacks from clerics against yellow newspapers three more times in the next few years. It stuck with this approach out of the conviction that it would add weight to its campaign to eradicate yellow journalism.³⁸

The Ottawa-based French-language organ, in its quest to undermine the wicked influence of sensationalist broadsheets, also pleaded with parents to guard their children from yellow newspapers. "Journaux et scandales", which appeared in 1925, included the organ's typical complaints about the demoralizing impacts of yellow newspapers but closed with an appeal to heads of households:

Combien de familles comprendront le danger qu'il y a
pour elles et leurs enfants à admettre à leur foyer de tels
engins de corruption ! Elles ne voudraient pas admettre
à leurs tables des personnes contaminées, des mets
empoisonnés : mais elles paient pour faire entrer chez
elles des journaux qui étioient l'intelligence et pervertissent
le cœur, des journaux qui salissent tout ce qu'elles aiment,

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ François Goyer, "Nous sommes en dangers", 6/3/1925, 3.

³⁸ The other editorials are Charles Gautier's "Une vigoureuse dénonciation", 2/18/1928, 3, "Condamnation méritée", 3/9/1928, 3, and "Instrument de perversion", 3/13/1928, 3.

tout ce qui les gardes saines et robustes.³⁹

The same viewpoint appeared in “Un poison social” which included several quotes from the Archbishop of Trois-Rivières, Monsignor François-Xavier Cloutier, about the negative impacts of exposing young children to scandalous newspapers. The cleric claimed that young children were unable to cope with the type of immoral content found in yellow newspapers. Monsignor Cloutier poignantly affirmed:

En matière de journaux, que les parents prennent garde de ne pas donner, ainsi que s'exprime l'Évangile, un scorpion à leurs fils qui demandent du pain. Cette image s'applique ici : un père de famille qui permet à ses enfants de s'intoxiquer du venin des scorpions de la mauvaise presse ou de la presse jaune, au lieu de nourrir leur esprit du bon pain salubre des journaux irréprochables est en vérité bien coupable et il assume une responsabilité dont il devrait trembler. Il s'en repentira un jour, quand il sera trop tard.⁴⁰

Le Droit printed another six editorials over the next five years asking parents to dutifully oppose yellow newspapers for the sake of their children.⁴¹ The last opinion piece in this set certainly did not leave any room for interpretation about the daily's conviction that sensationalistic newspapers threatened young family members. It asked bluntly “(e)st-il besoin de demander à un père de famille de ne pas donner de poison à ses enfants et de les préserver de la maladie ? Pourtant, les mauvais journaux sont plus dangereux, pour les enfants et les jeunes gens, que les épidémies ou la nourriture infectée.”⁴² The position presented in the last sentence explicitly demonstrates the organ's attitude about newspapers who sensationalised crime and focused on immoral conduct. The Oblate-controlled mouthpiece was of the opinion that those who read

³⁹ Charles Gautier, “Journaux et scandales”, 5/14/1925, 3.

⁴⁰ François-Xavier Cloutier, “Un poison social”, 5/10/1926, 3.

⁴¹ Charles Gautier's “Une explosion de jaunisme”, 8/16/1927, 3; “Nouvel accès de jaunisme”, 2/6/1928, 3; “Opinions d'honnêtes gens”, 2/16/1928, 3; “Une vigoureuse dénonciation”, 2/18/1928, 3; “Condamnation méritée...”, 3/9/1928, 3; and “Une plaie générale”, 3/15/1930, 3.

⁴² Charles Gautier, “Une plaie générale”, 3/15/1930, 3.

these types of newspapers, as well as those who made them available to children in their care, were in effect critically undermining the pillars of their community.

As mentioned earlier, the topic of spending time “at the movies” garnered significant space in *Le Droit*’s editorial sections. In fact, 45 opinion pieces appeared on this subject matter, making it the most talked about theme in the Subheading Morality.⁴³ The total number of editorials about the topic reflected how strongly those at *Le Droit* took exception to this increasingly popular diversion. They specifically objected to the fact that those who controlled the cinematic industry chose to offer content purely for entertainment purposes—i.e. movies about crime, love stories, or comedies—instead of using this powerful medium for educational purposes. Editorialist Albert Neville brought up this argument in 1914 by noting that “...les vues animées ne sont pas considérées comme un moyen d’éducation, mais simplement et exclusivement, comme un amusement.”⁴⁴ “Le cinéma”, which appeared in early 1922, explained that the increasing popularity of movies showed that the public was enamored with attending the cinema when not at work or school. The seeming irresistibility of movie houses, it was argued, meant that movie producers had to be extra-mindful to avoid content that might encourage social degeneration.⁴⁵ Movies should forego tales about criminal activities, dramas featuring greed, as well as love stories including lust-filled storylines. *Le Droit* was pleased to mention that “(d)ans plusieurs pays déjà des organisations se sont fondées pour les présenter au public, plus nombreux qu’on pense, qui réclame des spectacles moraux et instructifs.”⁴⁶ Several of the broadsheet’s

⁴³ While only seven editorials about cinema appeared in the 1910s, the increasing popularity of this new leisure activity in the next decade led the organ to publish much more editorials about this topic in the century’s third decade. Henri Lessard penned the most editorials (17) followed closely by Charles Gautier (15).

⁴⁴ Albert Neville, “Un grand mal”, 10/5/1914, 1.

⁴⁵ Charles Gautier, “Le cinéma”, 2/17/1922, 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

other editorialists echoed the call to sanitize movie content to protect society's wholesome nature.⁴⁷

The newspaper also played upon parental sensibilities in its push to improve movie content. *Le Droit*, for example, posited that unsavoury plot lines needed to be curtailed as they were especially damaging to younger moviegoers. Children and youth, it argued in 18 editorials from 1914 to 1932, had to be protected from the scandalous content often on offer in cinema houses. J. Albert Foisy's 1919 editorial "Sources de crimes" unequivocally explained that allowing vulnerable young people to see this type of material was tantamount to enrolling them in "vice school".⁴⁸ He validated this point in a subsequent editorial about a group of adolescents who had committed a crime spree. According to Foisy, the perpetrators told authorities that what they had seen on the big screen had inspired their lawlessness.⁴⁹ The editorialist explained that the result could have been predicted since "...sur cet écran se déroulent des scènes de toutes sortes, flattant toutes les passions, fouettant tous les instincts, développant tous les appétits, excitant tous les désirs...".⁵⁰ Young women, he also stated, appeared to be becoming more materialistic and increasingly expected "lives of leisure" as a consequence of the portrayals of leading ladies in the movies. A tragedy that occurred in a Montreal cinema in 1927 intensified the daily's campaign to protect children and youth from movie-going. In brief, 78 children perished in a fire at the Laurier Palace Theatre at a showing of a film for kids. This tragedy led *Le Droit* to re-double its campaign to stop the young from patronizing movie houses. The daily

⁴⁷ Some of these editorials include: Fulgence Charpentier, "Une dangereuse importation", 9/20/1923, 3; Henri Lessard, "Scène intolérables", 6/7/1927, 3; Henri Lessard, "Les temples du cinéma", 9/20/1927, 3; Henri Lessard, "Important problème", 11/16/1927, 3; Henri Lessard, "Le cinéma instructif", 4/2/1928, 3; Charles Gautier, "Cinéma et catholicisme", 7/3/1931, 3; and Henri Lessard, "Requêtes inacceptables", 11/7/1932, 3.

⁴⁸ J. Albert Foisy, "Sources de crimes", 6/6/1919, 1.

⁴⁹ Ibid., "Corrupteur social", 2/21/1920, 3.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

subsequently printed 22 editorials imploring parents to forbid their children from going to “the shows”, encouraging movie producers to clean up their content to protect impressionable youth, and asking the government to institute a minimum age requirement for entry into a cinema.⁵¹

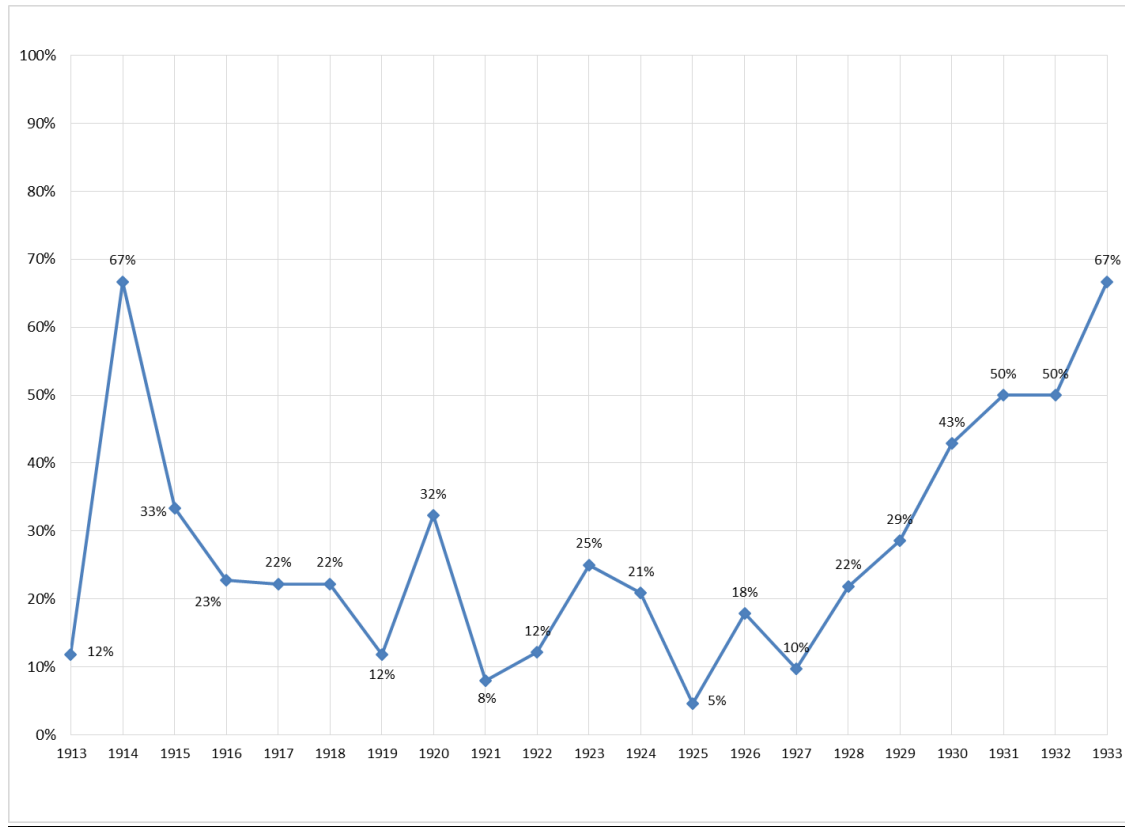
General Topic Values & Ideals—Subheading Use of Income

Content in the Subheading Use of Income consists of pieces telling readers about the importance of managing their resources responsively and to spend money wisely. This theme is mentioned in 115 editorials which are fairly evenly distributed across both decades. The Subheading Use of Income ranked second compared to others in this General Topic. (See Appendix E: General Topic Values & Ideals and its Subheadings per year) Although 17 authors contributed editorials to the Subheading Use of Income, Henri Lessard was by far the most prolific having penned 50 of the 115 opinion pieces.⁵² Examining the distribution of editorials from the Subheading Use of Income shows how socio-economic factors significantly influenced the amount of content *Le Droit* printed about this subject. Figure 15 shows that editorials dedicated to educating people about appropriate spending habits spiked when the country’s economic conditions were destabilized.

⁵¹ These editorials include: Henri Lessard, “Qu’on ne désiste pas”, 2/3/1927, 4; Henri Lessard, “L’école de cinéma”, 2/26/1927, 4; Charles Gautier, “Le cinéma et la censure”, 1/10/1928, 3; Henri Lessard, “Un autre point à gagner”, 12/20/1928, 4; and Charles Gautier, “Leur responsabilité”, 1/10/1931, 3.

⁵² Lessard’s contribution is quite impressive considering he did not join the editorial staff until 1922. The next most prolific contributor to this content was Charles Gautier (15) and then Richard Léopold (6).

**Figure 15: Editorial content in the General Topic Values & Ideals
from the Subheading Use of Income**



For instance, a significant jump occurred in 1914 as *Le Droit* published a series of editorials instructing readers about how to manage their resources during wartime conditions.⁵³ The advent of the Great Depression likewise led the organ to increase editorial content from the Subheading Use of Income. Much of this material coached readers on how to stretch meager resources during the severe economic downturn.⁵⁴

⁵³ A dozen editorials were penned in the context of World War I. They include: Albert Neville, “Offrons des foyers”, 10/14/1914, 1; Mlle U. Lussier, “Pour les Belges”, 10/14/14, 1; Pierre Du Pont, “Pour les Français”, 11/3/1914, 1; and unsigned, “Les Belges mourront de faim”, 11/19/1914, 1.

⁵⁴ Readers were exposed to 16 such editorials from 1929 to 1933. They include: Henri Lessard, “Dans toutes les classes”, 7/24/1930, 4; Léopold Richer, “On en jette à la mer”, 8/5/1931, 4; Henri Lessard, “De la belle charité”, 11/13/1931, 4; Charles Gautier, “Ce fond de secours”, 6/6/1932, 3; and Camille L’Heureux, “Cette souscription”, 2/27/1933, 4.

Probing the 115 editorials from the Subheading Use of Income surfaces two main arguments related to how to spend wisely and dispense extra wealth responsibly. First, a predominant amount of content instructed readers about the importance of sharing their good fortune with needy people in their community.⁵⁵ Promoting charity as a cornerstone of a caring society was certainly to be expected from an organ controlled by a Catholic order. *Le Droit*'s editorialists repeatedly argued that setting aside some money for charitable works was a Catholic duty.⁵⁶ Case in point, "L'économie chrétienne" from the end of 1914 opened with the adage "(l)a main du pauvre est la banque du Christ" to connect faith and philanthropy.⁵⁷ It specifically advised "(les) (r)iches, qui jouissez (sic) du bien-être et du confort, dans vos maisons bien chauffées ou dans vos riches pelleteries, faites de larges dépôts aux succursales de la banque du Christ."⁵⁸ Readers were then told in the closing paragraph that Christ would recognise those who had met the call of philanthropy. An editorial from the next decade likewise stated that giving to the less fortunate was a Christian expectation. In this case, it was asserted that God was responsible for the affluence that some people experienced. "L'usage des richesses" then explained that the arbitrary abundance of some needed to be used intentionally to support the less fortunate:

La richesse doit servir au soutien des pauvres, au progrès matériel, intellectuel et moral de l'humanité. La richesse n'est pas une fin, elle est un moyen et ceux qui ne s'en servent pas pour les bonnes causes manquent à leur devoir et détournent de leur véritable but les ressources que Dieu leur a données.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ This topic is the focal point of 65 out of 115 editorials in the Subheading Use of Income.

⁵⁶ Eleven editorials present this argument. They include: Luc Bérard, "Justice et charité", 10/25/1919, 3; Fulgence Charpentier, "Des cas pathétiques de misère à Ottawa", 1/21/1925, 3; and Henri Lessard, "La guignolée", 12/28/1931, 4.

⁵⁷ Gustave de Lennel 1/22/1914, 1.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Charles Gautier, "L'usage des richesses", 4/27/1926, 3.

Editorials maintaining that philanthropy was a Christian duty were joined by opinion pieces instructing readers about where to direct their charitable giving. Nearly 30 editorials spoke to the most deserving charitable causes—for instance, homelessness, families who had fallen on hard times due to unforeseen circumstances, children in orphanages, or the ill who were institutionalized.⁶⁰ *Le Droit* also published just over 20 editorials directing donors to specific organizations⁶¹ with the Société Saint-Vincent de Paul getting the most mentions.⁶² The piece “Pour les pauvres” from October 11, 1916 was the first to argue that, since this agency was launched to allow the Catholic Church to rightfully cater to the needs of the poor by “...distribuer les aumônes des fidèles”⁶³, it was supremely deserving of Christian help. A later editorial claimed that the organization typified the sanctity that separated Christian philanthropy from other types of charity. It explained that the former embodied the true spirit of giving:

Quelle différence, en effet, entre la charité chrétienne, et la charité officielle ! La dernière est orgueilleuse, brutale et dispendieuse. L’autre au contraire, est humble, douce et gratuite; elle naît d’un véritable amour du prochain; elle fait voir dans ceux qu’elle secoure non pas des déchets d’humanité, mais des membres de l’Église de Dieu, plus méritoires parce que plus souffrants.⁶⁴

Readers were told in 1931’s “Une Grande Oeuvre” that Quebec’s Premier had recently praised the good work undertaken by the Société Saint-Vincent de Paul. Its notable accomplishments proved that using denominational agencies to help the downtrodden was preferable to a

⁶⁰ They include: Charles Gautier, “Pour les pauvres”, 7/31/1920, 3; Charles Gautier, “Pour nos malades”, 5/19/1922, 3; and Henri Lessard, “Nos dames de la couture”, 10/13/1926, 4.

⁶¹ Institutions or charitable organisations mentioned as deserving of support included the St. Charles Hospice, L’Institut Jeanne d’Arc, the Ottawa General Hospital, Hull’s Hôpital Sacré Coeur, as well as the work undertaken by the Soeurs Grises for orphaned children.

⁶² A dozen opinion pieces appeared in the daily instructing readers to make their charitable gifts to this institution. Most notably: Henri Lessard, “L’organisation de la charité”, 3/2/1923, 4, “Progrès des œuvres de charité”, 7/22/1924, 4, and “Une grande œuvre”, 12/16/1931, 4.

⁶³ Unsigned, “Pour les pauvres”, 10/11/1916, 1.

⁶⁴ Charles Gautier, “La St. Vincent de Paul et la charité chrétienne”, 7/22/1922, 3.

government-led system.⁶⁵ This editorial certainly served to reinforce the fact that the responsibility to help others was imbedded in Christian ideals and, by consequence, was the responsibility of the Catholic Church and its supporting organizations.

Le Droit used the economic slump which started at the end of the decade to reemphasise the importance of earmarking resources for charitable causes. The greater majority of these editorials argued that meeting personal philanthropic responsibilities was timely given the severe conditions faced by an increasing share of the population. For instance, a 1931 editorial explained that the few who remained relatively unscathed by the economic downturn were duty-bound to donate more than typically expected.⁶⁶ A later editorial noted that an increasing proportion of people resorted to pre-authorised donation plans. This approach allowed the receiving agencies to predict how much they would have to distribute. Nevertheless, it was believed that more could be done as local charities only had roughly \$75 per week to distribute, "...c'est peu, très peu en égard aux besoins."⁶⁷ The gap between what people donated and how much was needed was again mentioned in the editorial "Une tâche énorme". It contended that the Société Saint-Vincent de Paul was facing an almost insurmountable task of helping an ever growing number of needy people.⁶⁸ Readers were beseeched to dig a bit further in their pockets to support the agency's good work.⁶⁹ The Great Depression evidently provided an apropos opportunity for the Catholic organ to revisit its position that reserving a proportion of income for charitable aims was a Christian obligation.

⁶⁵ Henri Lessard, "Une Grande Œuvre". 12/16/1931, 4.

⁶⁶ Henri Lessard, "Les besoins sont grands", 1/3/1931, 4.

⁶⁷ Henri Lessard, "Un beau mouvement", 10/31/1931, 4.

⁶⁸ Ibid., "Une tâche énorme", 8/20/1932, 4.

⁶⁹ Lending a hand could include giving advice as to how the agency could better serve those in need and volunteering when available. Ibid.

Content from the Subheading Use of Income, aside from instructing readers to devote a good portion of their earnings to charitable causes, also encouraged handling money responsibly and, when possible, putting aside extra income for inevitable emergencies. Of the 49 editorials dedicated to managing resources sensibly, 21 warned against common shortfalls which left many in a precarious financial position.⁷⁰ Although several of these opinion pieces recognized the rising cost of living, the point was repeatedly made that making ends meet was still possible. Needless expenditures were at the heart of many budgetary deficits. “L’économie du sou” which appeared on April 20, 1914 mentioned several unnecessary spending practices:

Des jeunes gens, dans la vigueur de la jeunesse, montent en tramway s’ils ont un mille ou deux à faire ; les jeunes filles portent à tous les jours de semaine, mauvais temps comme autrement, des toilettes aussi extravagantes pour le prix ridicule et absurde pour la forme ; des milliers d’hommes entrent tous les jours et plusieurs fois par jour dans les buvettes prendre des consommations qui ruinent leur santé tout aussi bien que leurs bourses.⁷¹

Thomas Poulin authored several pieces likewise arguing that questionable expenses undermined the ability to pay for essential needs. His perspective on the matter was displayed in the opening paragraph of “L’économie” where he stated “(i)l est difficile de trouver une époque où il soit plus question d’économie que la nôtre ; mais, par contre, il est aussi assez difficile de trouver un temps où il se fait plus de gaspillage.”⁷² Poulin then itemized several goods and activities he thought those on a limited budget should eschew. These included, “(l)es draps, les étoffes, les laines, les cuirs (qui) se vendent à des prix prohibitifs...” as well as going to the cinema.⁷³

Tobacco smoking was also seen as needlessly carving into peoples’ resources. “Ce que nous

⁷⁰ The 21 editorials spanned the entire 1913 to 1933 period. These include: Unsigned, “La cherté de la vie”, 10/17/1913, 1; Thomas Poulin, “Le choix de cadeaux”, 12/4/1916, 3; Henri Lessard, “Selon ses moyens”, 9/26/1923, 4; and Richard Léopold, “Ce que nous fumons”, 2/6/1931, 3.

⁷¹ Unsigned, “L’économie du sou”, 4/20/1914, 1.

⁷² Thomas Poulin, “L’économie”, 8/17/1918, 1.

⁷³ Ibid.

fumons” offered a detailed account of the exorbitant costs of smoking cigarettes or pipes. The average full-time smoker, it was mentioned, will have spent nearly \$12,000 on their habit by the age of 60.⁷⁴ It was then asserted that if a nation could somehow find a way to stop people from spending foulishly on smoking, “(elle) parviendrait le plus aisément du monde à éteindre sa dette nationale et à se créer une réserve d’or qui la mettrait à l’abri de toutes les surprises économiques.”⁷⁵

A slightly different perspective on the matter was showcased in “Vivre selon ses moyens” which focused on scheming commercial practices. According to this editorial, the public needed to consider the fact that businesses were always looking for ways to get them to spend their hard earned money. Increasingly sophisticated marketing strategies, the growing availability of credit, as well as all too common lay-away and installment-payment plans were noted as having been invented solely to allow consumers to purchase merchandise they could not afford and, in fact, rarely needed.⁷⁶ Buyers must be aware of the underhandedness of these approaches and, more importantly, that it was up to them to resist the temptation of scrupulous businessmen:

N’empêche cependant qu’il revient à chacun de résister
à toutes ces tentations, d’éviter le piège tendu et si fascinant.
Quoi que ce soit qui existe que l’on n’a pas inventé ou établi,
on reste toujours maître et responsable de ses actes. Rien ni
personne ne peut tout de même forcer quelqu’un de faire
l’acquisition de choses qu’il ne peut et ne prévoit pas pouvoir
payer facilement.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Richard Léopold, “Ce que nous fumons”, 2/6/1931, 3.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Henri Lessard, “Vivre selon ses moyens”, 8/12/1932, 4.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

With this editorial *Le Droit* argued that consumers needed to be extremely alert of new business strategies which tricked them into buying expensive or unnecessary items. The organ hoped that readers would be wise enough to avoid these pitfalls and, consequently, live within their means.

The last few editorials showed that *Le Droit* attempted to educate readers about the importance of weighing their purchases seriously. The organ published several other opinion pieces promoting measures to conserve resources, save money, and live modestly.⁷⁸ Most important in this campaign was ensuring that children and youth understood at an early age about the merits of spending responsibly. Albert Evelin's editorial "Pensons à l'enfant" opened by noting "(n)ous voulons parler des enfants qui ont l'avantage de jouir d'une certaine aisance, en recommandant aux parents de penser à eux, nous avons surtout en vue, l'éducation de ces petits au sujet de l'économie domestique."⁷⁹ It then explained that parents must set a good example by preaching the value of a dollar and staying true to a sensible budget. This argument was repeated in a similar editorial in January, 1923. In this case, it was asked whether the time had come for elementary and secondary school curriculum to promote the virtue of saving:

Il sont rares, aujourd'hui, les enfants, même les plus modestes familles, à ne posséder leur petite bourse particulière et individuelle. Elle contient des sous, les monnaies, les dollars des pères et mères généreux, trop généreux peut-être parfois que des parents ou des amis bienveillants donnent sous forme de récompenses, d'encouragements, de cadeaux. D'autre part, il y a des enfants qui travaillent les jours de congé ou après l'heure de classe...⁸⁰

Three more editorials at the end of the decade advocated for financial literacy training. This material argued that money management needed to be taught in schools as many parents did not

⁷⁸ Eight editorials focus on this matter. These include: Marc Marchessault, "L'épargne enrichit", 8/10/1921, 3; Henri Lessard, "L'épargne à l'école", 10/17/1923, 4; and Henri Lessard, "L'épargne scolaire à Montréal", 10/20/1923, 4.

⁷⁹ Albert Evelin, "Pensons à l'enfant", 2/13/15, 1.

⁸⁰ Henri Lessard, "L'épargne chez l'enfant", 1/3/1923, 4.

appear to be doing their part.⁸¹ *Le Droit* reiterated this notion a few years later in a piece that focused on the findings of C. J. Magnan, “(un) pédagogue d’une vaste expérience, (qui a) publié dans l’*Enseignement primaire* de septembre, un remarquable article en faveur de l’enseignement de l’épargne dans les écoles.”⁸² The editorial supported Magnan’s claim that using this type of curriculum was the best way to enhance what students might learn at home. A two-fold approach would ensure young people would be thought early on how to manage their finances and budget according to their resources. It is noteworthy to note that at the end of the 1920s *Le Droit* also regularly mentioned various initiatives directed at encouraging people to save and live modestly. For instance, it was explained in “Une habitude à rénover” how the Association catholique de la jeunesse canadienne (ACJC) recently hosted a successful public conference about these themes. According to the editorial, the ACJC “...a donc été bien inspirée de tenir un congrès sur cet important sujet, et on lui devra encore davantage si, de concert avec ses comités régionaux et ses cercles, elle réussit à nous rendre un peu plus économe.”⁸³ The newspaper publicly promoted the ACJC’s public education campaign in support of living modestly in its editorial pages. It printed nearly half a dozen pieces over a twelve-month period showcasing the ACJC-sponsored educational events on the matter. The organ’s opinion pieces recurrently claimed that these public education campaigns were imperative as overspending appeared to be increasingly fashionable.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Henri Lessard, “Les petits ruisseaux”, 3/2/1928, 4, “L’épargne à l’école”, 10/17/1923, 4, and “L’épargne scolaire à Montréal”, 10/20/1923, 4.

⁸² Léopold Richer, “Une initiative pratique”, 9/9/1932, 3.

⁸³ Henri Lessard, 12/30/1927, 4.

⁸⁴ The editorials include Henri Lessard’s “Les sous font les piastres”, 2/11/1928, 4, “Des millions en fumée”, 2/15/1928, 4, “Impossible”. 2/25/1928, 4, and “Une campagne tenace”, 3/2/1929, 4.

The preceding section about the Subheading Use of Income showed that *Le Droit* put a lot of effort into explaining how avoiding unnecessary purchases and sticking to a budget protected against finding oneself in dire financial straits. Although this message was largely aimed at individuals, it also mentioned how Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority should use this approach collaboratively. In brief, the newspaper published several editorials encouraging its members to manage their finances correctly as it afforded a protective benefit for the group. It introduced this position in "L'économie du sou" by noting "...nous voudrions voir le peuple, surtout les canadiens-français, économiser les sous qui se dépensent tous les jours inutilement et le plus souvent au détriment de notre race et de l'avenir de nos enfants."⁸⁵ Linking personal saving habits to the greater interests of the minority community was even clearer when it was explained:

Pour nous canadiens-français de l'Ontario, il est de la plus haute importance que nous acquérions au plus tôt notre indépendance économique ; avec cette indépendance nous aurons bien le reste, même la liberté d'enseigner le français et la religion catholique dans nos écoles.⁸⁶

This statement shows how the organ linked social Catholicism's precepts of living prudently to the fight to secure the minority rights of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic population. *Le Droit* explained to readers that adopting these practices would guard against their assimilation. The daily repeated this strategy several more times over the next two decades.⁸⁷ For instance, the editorial "Une oeuvre admirable" published on May 17, 1915 applauded French-speaking Catholic parents who cut their expenses to funnel resources to support their educational institutions. Doing so was part-in-parcel of working "...pour préparer à nos enfants un avenir qui

⁸⁵ Unsigned, "L'économie du sou", 4/20/1914, 1.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Other such editorials include: J. Edmond Cloutier, "Caisse de Noël et économie", 12/3/1920, 3; Henri Lessard, "Une habitude à rénover", 12/30/1927, 4; Henri Lessard, "Les sous font les piastres", 2/11/1928, 4; and Henri Lessard, "Des millions en fumée", 2/15/1928, 4.

leur permettra de continuer la lutte pour la revendication de nos droits outragés.”⁸⁸ J. Edmond Cloutier similarly spoke about how intentional spending was especially important for the minority in his “L’épargne canadienne et nos placements”. Franco-Ontarians, Cloutier noted, had to be extra mindful of their resources as spare monies could be marshalled to fight their opponents. He was of the opinion that being a good “saver” was not the end-all and be-all since it was equally important to “...savoir l’art de gérer ses économies.”⁸⁹ The author explained that money saved had to be used in a way that would enhance the group’s collective power:

(t)out placement a donc une portée sociale et, pour nous, Canadiens-français, une portée nationale. Il doit dès lors être fait avec prudence et discernement...Combien des nôtres semblent ignorer qu’il existe des banques, des maisons de placements, des compagnies d’assurances canadiennes-françaises toutes données à nos intérêts généraux et particuliers.⁹⁰

The editorialist also mentioned that the province’s minority had to be strategic with how it used its resources. Doing so, Cloutier asserted, could improve its odds of surviving in Ontario:

Combien ne savent pas qu’un dollar déposé ailleurs que dans nos industries, nos municipalités, nos commissions scolaires, nos fabriques, etc., est une aide à notre adversaire industriel et commercial et un affaiblissement pour la race !⁹¹

The newspaper therefore cleverly marshalled precepts of social Catholicism—e.g. the notions of saving, living modestly, and managing finances properly—as part of its campaign to protect Franco-Ontarians from assimilation.

⁸⁸ Unsigned, “Une oeuvre admirable”, 5/17/1915, 1.

⁸⁹ J. Edmond Cloutier, “L’épargne canadienne et nos placements”, 11/9/1920, 3.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

General Topic Values & Ideals—Subheading Temperance/Prohibition

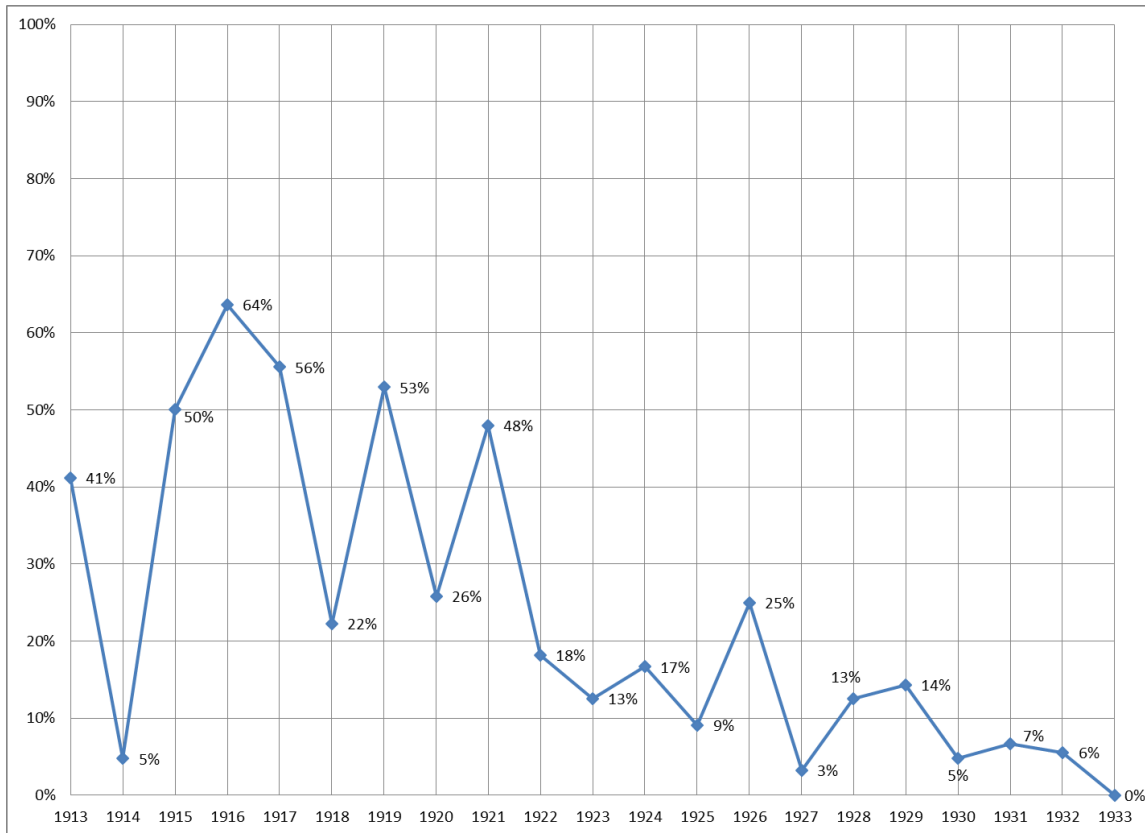
Content about the production, importation, sale, and the public's drinking habits of alcoholic beverages garnered the third highest share of editorial material in the General Topic Values & Ideals. (See Appendix E: General Topic Values & Ideal and its Subheadings per year) Over ten editorialists were responsible for the 100 opinion pieces the broadsheet published about these subjects.⁹² A quantitative examination shows that political events related to controlling alcohol distribution heavily influenced the amount of content *Le Droit* dedicated to this theme. The polarizing debate about how to curb alcohol consumption underscored these instances. It ultimately pitted those who supported voluntary measures to limit drinking against prohibitionists who wanted the State to outlaw the production, importation, and sale of liquor.⁹³ *Le Droit* waded into the matter as federal, provincial, and municipal legislatures debated about how to address the problem. A quantitative examination of editorials shows how sensitive *Le Droit* was to the public debate about this topic. Figure 16 illustrates how public and legislative debates on this matter, in advance of or after a new regulation was implemented, triggered a rush of editorials about the subject. This data also highlights that the organ likewise published pieces about this theme as voters prepared to cast their ballots in referendums and plebiscites that were held about alcohol availability.⁹⁴

⁹² Three editorialists were responsible for nearly three-quarters of the content. While J. Albert Foisy was the most prolific (25) followed by Thomas Poulin (22), and Henri Lessard (17).

⁹³ The Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Canada was a leading force behind the prohibitionist movement. For more information about the issue of alcohol, see Craig Heron's *Booze: a Distilled History* (Toronto: Between the Line, 2003).

⁹⁴ The Ontario Temperance Act of 1916 included a clause requiring a referendum on the matter every three years. The first such referendum was held in October, 1919. Just over two-thirds of Ontarians voted to keep the ban in place. Joseph Schull, *Ontario since 1867* (Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1978), 232. A second referendum was held in 1921 which asked voters if the government should ban the importation of alcoholic beverages. Just under sixty percent of voters agreed with this idea. Ibid., 250. The next vote occurred in October, 1924. Ontarians were asked whether the Ontario Temperance Act should be kept in place or repealed. A bare majority of 51.4% voted in favour. Ibid., 276. The Quebec referendum on the prohibition of alcohol held on April 10, 1919 likewise prompted the organ to publish a series of editorials about the matter. Gaffield, *Histoire de l'Outaouais*, 425.

**Figure 16: Editorial content in the General Topic Values & Ideals
from the Subheading Temperance/Prohibition**



The first spike in the Subheading Temperance/Prohibition occurred in 1915-1916 when the provincial government passed the Ontario Temperance Act (OTA).⁹⁵ The organ reacted the same way in 1917 as the federal government moved to implement a national prohibition as part of the war effort. The War Measures Act instituted in 1918 included a total ban on the production of alcoholic beverages.⁹⁶ Provincial referendums on the matter in 1919, 1921, and 1924 similarly incited *Le Droit* to publish editorials tabling its opinion. The last such bump appeared in 1926 as

⁹⁵ Ian Drummond, *Progress without Planning: The Economic History of Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 296.

⁹⁶ It must be noted that the Subheading Temperance/Prohibition includes five editorials where the matter was introduced directly in relation to the First World War. These pieces framed their arguments in the context of the war effort. These editorials are: Untitled, “Ce sont des farceurs”, 1/27/1916, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “Breuvage hygiénique”, 12/6/1916, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “Lloyd George a-t-il peur?”, 12/12/1916, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “La logique des faits”, 12/15/1916, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “Guerre au gaspillage”, 5/9/1917, 1; and J. Albert Foisy, “C’est une farce sinistre”, 8/23/1917, 1.

rumours spread that the Ferguson government was preparing to repeal the OTA. It ultimately revoked it the following year and subsequently created the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) which permitted the sale of liquor under State regulation.⁹⁷ The launch of the LCBO was the last political event that prompted *Le Droit*'s editorial board to publish extra content on this issue. Subsequent editorials about this topic were proactive expressions of the organ's opinion about alcohol consumption. None of these included arguments about the need for government intervention to encourage voluntary temperance or State-imposed prohibition.

A good amount of the content over our roughly twenty-year span focused on the undesirable impacts of excessive drinking. *Le Droit*' two-part series "L'alcoolisme: son oeuvre" published in 1913 contended that it was probably one of the worst vices as it was responsible "...pour amoindrir, flétrir et rendre moins homme, un homme...(l)e poison s'infiltré dans l'organisme par doses minimes, mais répétées, y développe chaque jour ses positions, et finit par s'y installer en maître, ruinant la santé, annihilant l'intelligence, tuant le sens moral."⁹⁸ The unsigned series then offered statistics about criminal activities committed by drunks as well as those driven to commit crimes to feed their addiction to demonstrate the social impacts of alcoholism.⁹⁹ This content included estimates from the United States "...que 3,600 femmes sont tuées tous les ans par leurs maris, en état d'ivresse. 3,500 bébés ont le même sort. Tous les ans on constate 180,000 cas de folie, causés également par l'alcoolisme."¹⁰⁰ Wasting valuable

⁹⁷ Drummond, *Progress without Planning*, 297.

⁹⁸ Untitled, "L'alcoolisme: son oeuvre", 8/15/1913, 1.

⁹⁹ Five other editorials link excessive drinking to higher crime rates. They include: J. Albert Foisy, "La prohibition au Manitoba". 7/3/1916, 1 and Thomas Poulin "Il n'en sera pas autrement". 9/12/1916, 1

¹⁰⁰ 8/16/1913, 1.

resources was another oft-cited argument against over-imbibing.¹⁰¹ This topic was front and center in the December 26, 1913 editorial “Un vice dégradant” which noted:

Il n’y a pas à se le dissimuler; Ottawa et Hull souffrent énormément de l’abus des liqueurs et dans un temps où l’on se plaint du coût élevé de la vie, il est tout à fait stupéfiant de constater combien il se gaspille d’argent pour les liqueurs, et combien de pauvres malheureux marchent sans y songer vers l’abîme et le déshonneur.¹⁰²

The daily likewise explained in “Les bienfaits de la prohibition” how spending on alcohol was a significant drain on financial resources since “...l’alcool qui engloutit à chaque année, rien qu’au Canada, cent millions de piastres, soit près de 275,000,000 par jour.”¹⁰³ Health reasons joined pecuniary arguments against heavy drinking.¹⁰⁴ Most of the ten editorials which used this approach presented findings from either health practitioners or medical institutions. For instance, “Le plus grand fléau” presented information provided by the *Health Bulletin*, a Canadian medical publication. This periodical, headed by Dr. Charles J. Hastings, claimed that consuming too much alcohol was more harmful than abusing morphine or cocaine. It also explained how those in the medical field were convinced that alcohol abuse contributed to numerous liver, kidney, heart, and nervous system diseases.¹⁰⁵ The newspaper also took the time to mention how children born and raised by heavy drinkers had poor health outcomes. The January 1, 1916 piece “L’alcool et la mortalité infantile” maintained that alcoholism had a hereditary impact which devastated the offspring of alcoholics. Readers learned that a significant proportion of children

¹⁰¹ Six editorials presented this argument to 1919. They include: Untitled, “Le mouvement de tempérance”, 12/20/1915 1; Thomas Poulin, “Il n’en sera pas autrement”, 9/12/1916, 1; and J. Albert Foisy, “La prohibition”, 2/11/1919, 1.

¹⁰² Untitled, “Un vice dégradant”, 12/26/1913, 1.

¹⁰³ Untitled, “Les bienfaits de la prohibition”, 12/22/1915, 1.

¹⁰⁴ The editorial “La tempérance et ses adversaires” printed on November 11, 1915 was the first to present this position. J. Albert Foisy employed this argument in almost all his pieces. It was a central focus of the following editorials: “La prohibition nationale”. 10/6/1916, 1; “Pourquoi la prohibition totale ?” 11/6/1916, 1; and “De faux missionnaires”. 3/30/1917, 1.

¹⁰⁵ Pierre Du Pont, “Le plus grand fléau”, 12/15/1915, 1.

suffered from chronic diseases while some even died prematurely due to their parents' heavy drinking habits.¹⁰⁶ Adults, *Le Droit* believed, needed to realise that their alcohol consumption had a very significant impact on the health of their progeny.

An examination of editorials about how society could cope with this serious issue shows *Le Droit* changing its position twice between 1913 and 1933. At the outset, it published a set of editorials supporting voluntary restraint. For instance, a June 12, 1913 editorial titled “La tempérance” explained that limiting the number of hotels with a liquor license would be an effective way to dissuade heavy drinking: “(l)e plus simple à faire est de diminuer de moitié le nombre des hôtels, d’en laisser seulement où un réel besoin se fait sentir et tout le monde en sera mieux.”¹⁰⁷ A piece appeared the following year mentioning that the Catholic Church staunchly supported this position. It included a passage from Pope Pius IX, pontif from 1846 to 1878, proclaiming the importance of self-restraint when partaking in alcohol:

Nous vous recommandons pour le véritable bien des fidèles de favoriser vivement partout le mouvement d’abstinence totale parmi les dirigeants de l’Église et de ses fidèles. Nous vous souhaitons le plus vif succès pour vos efforts et nous vous envoyons à vous et à tous ceux qui vous aideront dans cette œuvre, notre bénédiction apostolique.¹⁰⁸

Similar expressions from Pope Leo XIII, pontiff from 1878 to 1903, and Pope Pius X, who reigned from 1903 to 1914, were included in this editorial. The organ published five opinion pieces to the end of 1915 advocating for personal temperance.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Patriote, “L’alcool et la mortalité infantile”, 1/3/1916, 1.

¹⁰⁷ Untitled, “La tempérance”, 6/12/1913, 1.

¹⁰⁸ Gustave de Lennel, “Geurre à l’alcoolisme”, 12/10/1914, 1.

¹⁰⁹ The initial editorials in support of prohibition include: Untitled, “Les bienfaits de la prohibition”, 12/22/1915, 1; and untitled, “L’alcool est un poison”, 12/27/1915, 1. The broadsheet published 35 opinion pieces over the next five years in support of State-imposed prohibition.

At the midpoint of the decade, *Le Droit* printed editorials showing that it had a change of heart on the matter. The first such opinion piece pointed out that those municipalities who had resorted to prohibition were seeing the benefits of their decision. A statement from the mayor of Thetford Mines, a Quebec town “dry” since 1908, served to demonstrate this point. Although it was initially difficult to do away with those who sold liquor illegally, Mayor Ernest Carreau was quoted as saying, “...maintenant nous n’avons aucune misère sous ce rapport, et nous vivons au milieu d’une population de gens sobres, qui semblent satisfaits de l’état actuel.”¹¹⁰ The following year, the organ put its full weight behind getting the federal government to institute a national ban on alcohol production, importation, and sale. Lobbying the central government was necessary as the provinces had limited means to orchestrate this complex and far-reaching measure. It was argued in a October 6, 1916 editorial that federal officials needed to step into the legislative void.¹¹¹ A national prohibition, the piece mentioned, could be easily implemented as the central government controlled trade and foreign imports.¹¹² *Le Droit* likewise referred to wartime conditions in making the case for having a federally-sanctioned prohibition on manufacturing, importing, and selling of alcoholic beverages. The May 9, 1917 editorial “Guerre au gaspillage” explained that:

(l)a situation économique du Canada, en ce qui touche l’alimentation, est tellement sérieuse que le gaspillage, quel qu’il en soit, est un crime de trahison nationale, car il peut facilement acculer les Alliés à la nécessité de demander la paix, pour échapper à la famine.¹¹³

It then added that it supported those who were pressuring the federal government to ensure that the national cereal crop did not slip into the hands of illegitimate distillers.¹¹⁴ The editorial

¹¹⁰ Untitled, “Les bienfaits de la prohibition”, 12/21/1915, 1.

¹¹¹ J. Albert Foisy, “La prohibition nationale”, 10/6/1916, 1.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ J. Albert Foisy, “Guerre au gaspillage”, 5/9/1917, 1.

closed with the emphatic statement “(l)a situation est grave, le pays a besoin de toutes ses ressources, et l’industrie des brasseurs et des distilleurs (sic) est une blessure par laquelle le Canada perd une grande partie de ses forces.”¹¹⁵

Another common refrain from the now prohibition-supporting organ was the need for authorities to do more to clamp down on unauthorised alcohol sales. The emergence of “blind pigs”, *Le Droit* argued, undermined the entire prohibitionist movement. Editorialist Thomas Poulin argued in mid-1919 that these clandestine operations, aside from creating significant policing and legal expenses, were especially dangerous as what people were buying had not been monitored for purity. What was being sold, the daily claimed, might be harmful even in the smallest amounts. Producers and customers were implored “(p)our l’amour de Dieu, de la santé, de la race, réfléchissons un peu et cessons à tout jamais de fabriquer ces poisons, de les boire ou de les faire boire aux autres.”¹¹⁶

The organ, aside from touting the advantages of prohibition, also printed several pieces challenging the arguments presented by opponents of an outright alcohol ban. For instance, “La prohibition et la liberté humaine” took exception with the claim that prohibition infringed on personal liberties, including that of retailers. Readers were told that selling noxious products should not be considered an “individual right”. Banning alcohol sales was in line with the government’s duty to prohibit the sale of cocaine or opium.¹¹⁷ *Le Droit* then took umbrage with

¹¹⁴ Ibid. Some alcohol was still being produced for munitions and other war-related needs. For more on this matter, see Ian Drummond, *Progress without Planning: The Economic History of Ontario from Confederation to the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

¹¹⁵ J. Albert Foisy, “Guerre au gaspillage”, 5/9/1917, 1.

¹¹⁶ Thomas Poulin, “Cessons au plus tôt !”, 7/16/1919, 4.

¹¹⁷ Albert Neville, “La prohibition et la liberté humaine”, 3/3/1916. 1.

the position that the legislation would be a precedent for allowing the government to regulate all types of personal conduct:

Est-ce bien une tentative “nouvelle et dangereuse” de régler la conduite des individus par des lois, que l’établissement de la prohibition, par la majorité d’une population ? Si l’on accepte le principe de démocratie, il faut en accepter les inconvénients comme les avantages, et quand la violation d’un principe constitutionnel ou droit naturel et divin n’est pas violé on doit se soumettre à la décision de la majorité.¹¹⁸

Le Droit came back to this issue several times in the next months.¹¹⁹ It also took exception with the assertion that prohibition should be abandoned because it led to “blind pigs”. In short, the case was made by some in the public that clandestine drinking operations and, more importantly, organised crime syndicates who controlled them, were more troublesome than the conditions that had compelled authorities to ban alcohol in the first place. J. Albert Foisy proclaimed, for instance, that prohibition should not be blamed for the emergence of these illegal businesses. The fault in fact lies with local officials who fail to allocate appropriate resources to stamp them out.¹²⁰ The editorialist also assailed those who made a living from alcohol sales for mounting the charge against prohibition. According to Foisy, the campaign to end prohibition was an attempt by a group of immoral businessmen to repeal a law that benefited all Canadians simply because it undermined their personal livelihood. The newspaper claimed that they were heartless in opposing prohibition as they failed to consider “...les larmes et les misères dont ces profits étaient la cause, ils ne considéraient que l’aisance que ce commerce leur apportait et trouvaient que la prohibition était un mal...pour eux.”¹²¹ With this statement, *Le Droit* made it clear that

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Some of these editorials include: J. Albert Foisy, “Arguments boîteux”, 8/12/1916, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “Ce sont des farceurs”, 11/27/1916, 1; and J. Albert Foisy, “Un mouvement sérieux”, 10/30/1916, 1.

¹²⁰ J. Albert Foisy, “Argument boîteux”, 8/12/1916, 1.

¹²¹ Ibid., “Les vrais ennemis”, 6/21/1918, 1.

personal business imperatives should not be accommodated if society as a whole bore the brunt of a product or service.

Although the newspaper staunchly defended a State-imposed prohibition on alcohol from late 1915 to 1919, its position softened beginning in 1920. This transformation occurred as Quebecers voted on a measure to repeal the prohibition on alcohol sales.¹²² Provincial authorities acquiesced to the will of the people and also instituted the Alcoholic Beverages Act in 1921 which created the Commission des liqueurs de Québec. This provincial agency was authorised to distribute permits to commercial enterprises to serve and sell alcoholic products. *Le Droit* published a slew of editorials offering its position on these developments.¹²³ An exploration of this content outlines how the newspaper justified abandoning its short-lived support of prohibition in favour of using government mechanisms to promote personal temperance. Although at first sceptical that a government agency could effectively control alcohol availability, by early 1922 *Le Droit* appeared convinced that this approach was workable.¹²⁴ The former position was due to its scepticism that the government was ready to put into place the right measures and allocate appropriate resources to regulate businesses that serve and sell alcohol. The opinion piece “Le contrôle exclusif” from January 31, 1921 maintained that government officials were already overwhelmed with investigating and screening liquor license requests. It closed by arguing that citizens needed to understand that this situation was

¹²² 78% of those who cast a vote in the April 10, 1919 referendum supported the legalization of the sale of beer, cider and wine. Gaffield, *Histoire de l’Outaouais*, 425.

¹²³ Eighteen editorials were published on these matters from early 1920 to the end of 1921. They include: Thomas Poulin, “Les licences”, 3/13/1920, 3; Thomas Poulin, “Elle était nécessaire”, 12/10/1920, 4; Thomas Poulin, “Son premier travail”, 3/4/1921, 4; and Thomas Poulin, “Le mal est là”, 9/21/1921, 4.

¹²⁴ The organ’s early opposition to this approach appears in Thomas Poulin, “Notre critique”, 4/8/1920, 4 as well as Thomas Poulin, “Une loi manquée”, 11/2/1920, 4. The latter claimed the government’s solution would only open the door for more bootlegging and blind pigs than had emerged during the prohibition era.

unworkable and, consequently, “la loi actuelle ne vaut rien.”¹²⁵ Another piece appeared later in the year similarly deriding the State for putting into place a poorly designed alcohol distribution system which appeared destined to fail. It went to great lengths to specify that the Commission des liqueurs de Québec was not to blame for the problems that had emerged since launching. All that was required was more support to ensure the legal system could process the high number of cases against offenders operating without a liquor licence.¹²⁶ Adding more magistrates and judges would allow the justice system to work more expeditiously and effectively.¹²⁷ The daily also specified that capping the number of licenses awarded in Quebec would promote restraint. For example, “Les licences à la Pointe Gatineau” argued against providing more liquor licences in this relatively small town. Increasing its number was unnecessary as “(i)l y a déjà trois licences de ventre de bière à la Pointe-Gatineau et, à en croire des témoignages qui ne devraient pas être suspectés, ce nombre suffit absolument pour satisfaire la population qui compte environ trois cents familles.”¹²⁸ *Le Droit* then called on the Commission des liqueurs de Québec to use its discretion when considering which establishments should be granted a liquor license. In this case, the issue focused on the increasingly popular cafés that served alcohol to male and female patrons:

Ces établissements (illégaux) ne sont certes pas à l’avantage de notre ville, pour sa bonne réputation...à vrai dire ils ne devraient pas exister....Ce devrait être un des beaux actes de la Commission des Liqueurs (sic) d’abolir une fois et pour toutes et partout ces cafés licenciés.¹²⁹

These editorials demonstrated that *Le Droit* was not fully opposed to moving away from outright prohibition so long as the provincial government instituted robust enough measures and provided

¹²⁵ Thomas Poulin, “Le contrôle exclusif”, 1/31/1921, 4.

¹²⁶ Ibid., “Autre Juge”, 10/15/1921, 4.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Henri Lessard, “Les licences à la Pointe Gatineau”, 1/28/1926, 4.

¹²⁹ Ibid., “Endroits peu recommandables”, 12/27/1928, 4.

the necessary resources to ensure the new system was efficient and effective. The most important step, it argued, was having a well-resourced civil service to appropriately process license requests. Supporting the justice system and capping the number of licenses would ensure the province had a reasonable number of reputable providers selling safely manufactured alcoholic products.

Le Droit's focus on changes to alcohol availability in Quebec ultimately informed its position on the situation in Ontario. In effect, once the organ made it clear that it supported the system created by the Quebec government, it called on Ontario to adopt a similar approach.¹³⁰ Fulgence Charpentier, an editorialist whose work appeared mainly in the early 1920s, was the first to cast a stone against the system of prohibition in place in Ontario. In "Tempérance, très bien, prohibition, très mal" he detailed how various experiments with total State-imposed prohibition had proven to be outright failures. He drew his conclusion mainly from the findings of a report published in the *Christian Science Monitor* which noted that banning alcohol in the U.S. town of Wolstead had increased criminal activity and done very little to reduce heavy drinking.¹³¹ Charpentier likewise referred to data presenting how arrests and convictions for several alcohol-related offences had actually increased since prohibition was instituted in Ontario.¹³² He then asked "(s)ur toute la ligne il y a progression, mais où se trouve le progress ?", and finished by castigating the Dominion Alliance for the Total Suppression of the Liquor

¹³⁰ *Le Droit* published 11 editorials from 1921 to 1926 telling readers that the government of Ontario should repeal laws that prohibited alcohol production and sales. Although the government changed its course in 1927, the organ printed seven more editorials to convince readers that the new course of action was well taken. These include: Henri Lessard, "Les plus coupables", 1/13/1927, 4; Camille L'Heureux, "Des aveux", 12/9/1930, 3; and Camille L'Heureux, "Deux protestations", 9/28/1931, 3.

¹³¹ Fulgence Charpentier, "Tempérance, très bien, prohibition, très mal", 11/4/1922, 3. For more details about this matter, see Gerald Hallowell. *Prohibition in Ontario, 1919-1923* (Ottawa: Lower Printing Service, 1972).

¹³² He noted that arrests for public intoxication had actually risen from 12 785 in 1912 to 14 498 in 1921, while charges for dangerous behaviour due to intoxication had likewise jumped from 6 448 in 1912 to 9 145 in 1921. Ibid.

Traffic, a temperance lobby group active across Canada, for continuing to lobby municipal, provincial, and federal governments to support prohibition.¹³³

The daily also printed several editorials favouring the repeal of prohibition as Ontarians were about to vote in an electoral campaign where the topic was front and center. The editorial “Le plébiscite du 23 octobre” is an example of this content. In this case, readers were informed that they must vote to repeal prohibition because it suppresses the rights of the majority in the spirit of protecting individual rights.¹³⁴ A related editorial appeared during the 1926 provincial election campaign which aimed to convince the public that repealing prohibition should be top of mind when they cast their ballot. The November 3 editorial came out strongly against prohibition:

La prohibition totale est irréalisable. Les provinces canadiennes et les autres pays qui ont cru pouvoir l'appliquer se sont aperçus tôt ou tard de leur erreur. En voulant imposer de force la vertu de la tempérance, ils ont, en retour de quelques bienfaits, ouvert la porte à des abus intolérables.¹³⁵

The remainder of the piece included several other arguments to convince voters to back the Conservatives as they promised to end prohibition.¹³⁶ The resounding victory of the Ferguson forces led to prohibition's repeal and the institution of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) in 1927. This new provincial Crown Corporation was given oversight for selling wine, beer, and spirits at government-run establishments. The LCBO would also manage the granting of liquor licenses to establishments seeking to serve liquor. The newspaper printed a few

¹³³ The Dominion Alliance was formed in the last quarter of the nineteenth-century as a lobby organisation to compel governments to adopt prohibition. Ibid.

¹³⁴ Charles Gautier, “Le plébiscite du 23 octobre”, 9/27/1924, 3.

¹³⁵ Ibid., “Les élections provinciales et la loi de tempérance”, 11/3/1926, 3.

¹³⁶ Ontario's Liberal, Progressive and United Farmer parties campaigned against repealing prohibition.

editorials heralding this move. For instance, it was noted that this new system benefited cities on the Quebec-side of the Ottawa River as Ontarians had over the past nine years flocked to them to purchase and drink alcohol. *Le Droit* was confident that with a matching system in Ontario, these cities would no longer have to deal with the problems which had arisen when they had become the de facto watering holes of their Ontario neighbours.¹³⁷

The last five editorials in the Subheading Temperance/Prohibition aimed at convincing readers that various attempts at sustaining prohibition revealed the flaws of this policy. The editorialists specifically outlined how the United States was overwhelmed with the negative effects of holding on to national prohibition.¹³⁸ Most Americans, it was stated, were now very much in favour of repealing prohibition as “le 18^e amendement n’est plus à sa place dans la constitution politique des États-Unis. Seuls quelques fanatiques ‘hydropotes psychopompes’, comme on les appelés, s’opposent au rappel de la loi Volstead et à l’instauration d’un régime de contrôle gouvernemental comme celui que nous avons dans les diverses provinces canadiennes.”¹³⁹ This opinion piece was another way to convince readers that politicians were unwise in sticking with an approach that proved inefficient and ineffective while being very costly to enforce. State-imposed prohibition, those at *Le Droit* believed, was an experiment that had been tried and failed miserably.

Conclusion

As was shown above, *Le Droit* did not shy away from offering opinion pieces about appropriate conduct. The content in the General Topic Values & Ideals includes advice to guide

¹³⁷ Henri Lessard, “Les plus coupables”, 1/13/1927, 4.

¹³⁸ Camille L’Heureux, “Des aveux”, 12/9/1930, 3; Camille L’Heureux, “Deux protestations”, 9/28/1931, 3; and Charles Gautier, “La prohibition américaine”, 6/18/1932, 3.

¹³⁹ Charles Gautier, “La prohibition américaine”, 6/18/1932, 3.

personal behavior in line with the expectations of the Catholic Church. Publishing this type of material was certainly not unexpected from a newspaper heavily influenced by an Oblate order. For instance, it is not surprising that the General Topic Values & Ideals included editorials arguing that selfishness was at the heart of many distasteful activities which threatened society. Material telling readers to live modestly as well as fulfill their Christian duty of giving to charitable works were also predictable. It is likewise not a bombshell that *Le Droit* asserted that the only way to stop the degeneration of society was to respect Catholic traditions which it maintained were the cornerstones of stable, peaceful, and prosperous communities. Interestingly the newspaper oftentimes linked those directives to the fight to keep Franco-Ontarians from assimilation. For example, material in the Subheading Use of Income told readers that living modestly would increase their economic clout which could be leveraged to protect their minority rights. Content about how the minority could grow its political influence reflected how the newspaper was becoming savvier in its approach to protecting the province's French-speaking group. Aside from railing against those who threatened minority rights, *Le Droit* published more and more content telling its readers how they could protect themselves. As will be seen in upcoming chapters, relying on the benefits of increasing their economic wealth was a cornerstone of this pro-active strategy.

It also needs to be recognised that curtailing the share of editorials from the General Topic Values & Ideals reflected the broadsheet's attempt to remain competitive in the newspaper marketplace. In short, *Le Droit* intentionally decreased editorials about behaviour to make room for other types of material readers wanted to see in a newspaper. This new approach certainly took the broadsheet further and further away from its founding intentions of offering readers a

sober ideological organ akin to nineteenth-century offerings. The following chapter will provide several more instances where practicality was oftentimes a driving force behind editorial board decisions. It will also show how, in certain circumstances, *Le Droit* promoted positions that contradicted social Catholic dictums. This strategy, as will be demonstrated, indicates that protecting the rights of the French-speaking Catholic population was sacrosanct for those who led the daily.

CHAPTER FOUR

Le Droit's ideal community

Chapter Two provided a first look at how the Oblate-controlled organ published editorials promoting social Catholicism alongside pieces germane to the fight for the survival of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority. Much of the content in the General Topics Education and Family was part of the same two campaigns. For instance, a lot the material in the former argued that a formal education was a bedrock of a thriving and stable society. Childhood education, higher education, and lifelong learning for adults were all encouraged in *Le Droit*. The daily's commitment to social Catholicism similarly influenced the editorials it published about family-related matters.¹ Readers were consistently told that a traditional family respectful of customary gender roles was essential to stable and prosperous societies. Discouraging divorce and supporting high reproductive rates were other ways to ensure healthy communities. Editorialists, as they did with opinion pieces in the General Topic Values & Ideals, oftentimes linked the arguments they made in favour of a well-educated population or respecting traditional family values to safeguarding Ontario's French-language Catholic minority from assimilation. Editorials in the General Topics Education and Family frequently presented strategies to diminish the chances that the Franco-Ontarian community would be subsumed in the majority English-speaking Protestant population. Most of the tactics the newspaper promoted sought to increase the group's economic clout to better lobby government officials to protect its minority rights. This content reflects *Le Droit's* adoption of a proactive strategy to protecting Franco-

¹ Clerics in Quebec similarly led the charge in a public campaign to encourage the province's majority to respect traditional social structures and embrace orthodox ideals. Antonin Dupont argues in *Les relations entre l'Église et l'État sous Louis-Alexandre Taschereau, 1920-1936* (Montréal : Guérin, 1973) that Church leaders increasingly encroached into the political arena in doing so.

Ontarians. As will be shown, in some instances the organ, in the hopes of protecting the minority, embraced positions which challenged the precepts of social Catholicism.² Doing so reflected the pragmatism of the daily's leadership who were committed, above all, to the survival of Ontario's French-speaking population.

General Topic Education—Subheading Higher Education

The General Topic Education ranked near the bottom between 1913 and 1933.³ Aside from a high-water mark in 1916 where it was the fifth rated General Topic, it was either ninth or tenth overall thirteen times in those twenty years. (See Appendix C: General Topics per Year and Appendix D: General Topics per Year by Rank) The 224 editorials from this theme are clustered into three subjects: Higher Education, Early Education, and Lifelong Learning. The Subheading Higher Education was the most popular with 103 editorials.⁴ (See Appendix F: General Topic Education and its Subheadings per Year) It includes editorials promoting the benefits of pursuing post-secondary studies at skilled trades' institutes or general education academies. It also contains pieces extolling the virtues of attending universities or institutes that confer professional designations. The Subheading Higher Education, aside from garnering the most proportional attention in the General Topic Education, ranked first overall 14 of the 19 years between 1913 and 1933. Figure 17 shows that this subset of editorials, aside from four years, represented at

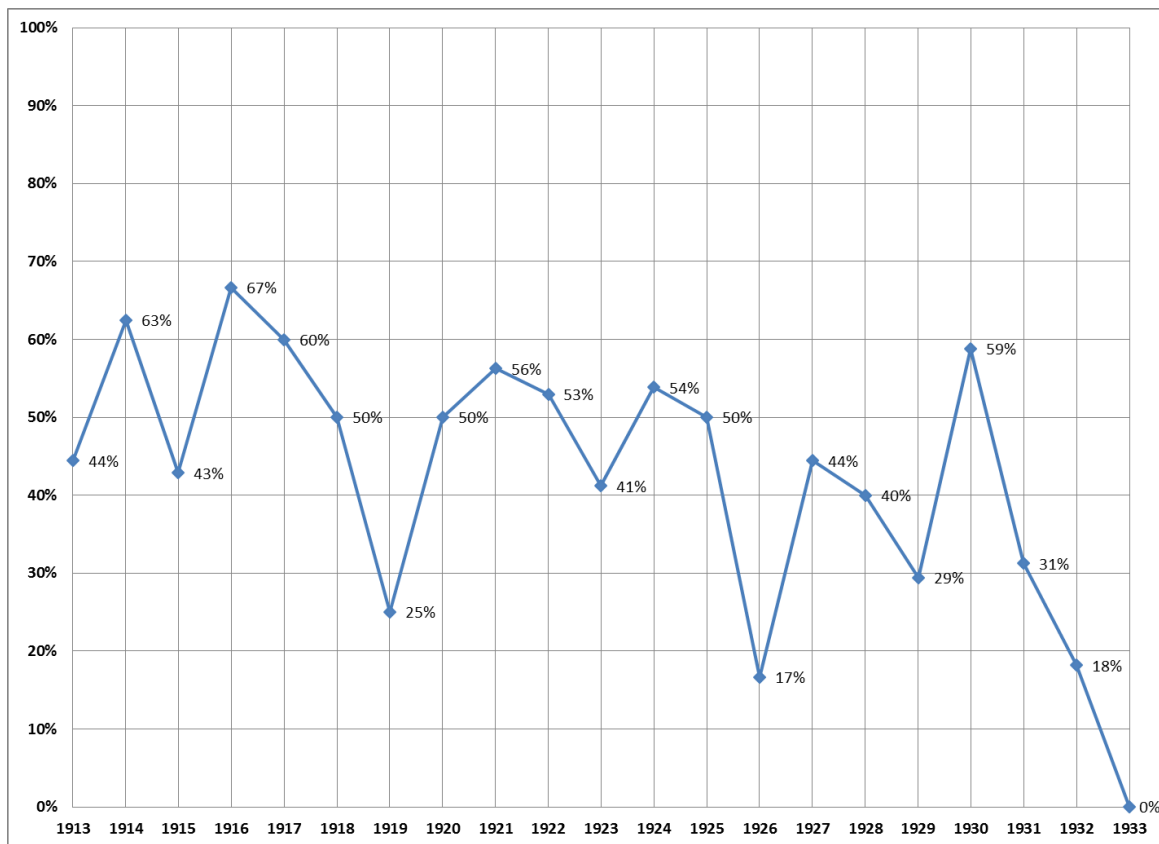
² Joseph Levitt's *Henri Bourassa and the Golden Calf: the social program of the Nationalists of Quebec, 1900-1914* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1969) offers a telling interpretation positing that some divisions existed amongst Quebec intellectuals on these types of issues and, most importantly, the question of how to cope with emerging modern, industrial conditions. In brief, Levitt argues that Bourassa did not support socially conservative positions held by others in the Nationalist movement.

³ The General Topic Education excludes material about the question of French-language schooling in the context of the fight to repeal Regulation 17. This material appears in the General Topic Religion & Language. Editorials in the General Topic Education speak to the importance of formal schooling, educational pathways, and learning opportunities outside of academic settings.

⁴ The Subheading Higher Education contains 103 editorials followed by the Subheading Early Education with 86 editorials, and 35 opinion pieces in the Subheading Lifelong Learning.

minimum a quarter of the content in this Subheading while reaching at least the fifty-percent mark in ten different years.

Figure 17: Editorial content in the General Topic Education from the Subheading Higher Education



The greater majority of editorials in this Subheading focused on encouraging people to attend university.⁵ The University of Ottawa was the subject of 34 out of 38 of the pieces which appeared regularly over both decades.⁶ Focusing this much attention on this specific institution could have been expected as the Oblates, who had founded its precursor, remained heavily

⁵ Eight editorialists contributed to this content. J. Albert Foisy produced 11 of the 14 signed editorials from 1913 to 1920, while Charles Gautier penned 11 of the 20 pieces from 1920 to 1932.

⁶ These opinion pieces include: *Le Droit*, unsigned, “Élevons nos enfant”, 7/8/1914, 1; *Le Droit*, J. Albert Foisy, “Pour l’éducation des garçons”, 8/25/1916, 1; *Le Droit*, Charles Gautier, “Ces attaques contre l’université”, 5/28/1924, 3; and *Le Droit*, Charles Gautier, “Où envoyer nos enfants”, 7/16/1931, 3. All newspaper citations for the remainder of this chapter will refer to *Le Droit*.

involved in its administration.⁷ A few of these editorials mentioned how attending this specific higher learning institutes had several benefits. For instance, many noted that graduates of the University of Ottawa could expect to use the skills and knowledge they had acquired to access the best paying and most rewarding careers.⁸

However, the greater majority of editorials touting the advantages for French-speaking Catholic Ontarians of attending the University of Ottawa were positioned as a means of blocking their assimilation.⁹ *Le Droit*, it should be mentioned, advanced this claim in nine other pieces about higher learning in general. For example, in 1913 it implored youth who had just graduated from secondary school to continue with their studies since it would allow them “...de se préparer par un travail assidu et constant à devenir les champions de nos droits dans la lutte commencée depuis quelques années et qui s’annonce plus tenace que jamais.”¹⁰ Another eight editorials appeared to 1930 likewise claiming that completing any form of higher education would create skilled leaders who would be champions in the campaign to defend minority rights. The titles of some of these opinion pieces clearly indicated the point the daily was trying to make to its readers. They included, for instance, “Le blé qui lève”, “Donnez-nous des hommes”, as well as

⁷ They had launched the College of Bytown in 1848 as a liberal arts institution. It was renamed College of Ottawa in 1861. Choquette, *La foi*, 161. It received its university charter in 1866 as a bilingual institution allowing it to confer undergraduate and graduate degrees. Pope Leo XIII elevated the institution to a pontifical university in 1889 by granting it a pontifical charter. For more about the early years of the University of Ottawa, see Roger Guindon, *Coexistence menacée: La dualité linguistique à l’Université d’Ottawa, Volume 2 : 1898-1936* (Ottawa : Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1989) or Jeff Keshen and Nicole St-Onge, *Ottawa - Making a Capital* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2001).

⁸ Some of these editorials include: Unsigned, “L’université d’Ottawa”. 7/9/1914, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “Pour l’éducation des garçons”, 6/21/1917, 1; and Charles Gautier, “La nécessité de l’instruction”, 6/27/1931, 1.

⁹ *Le Droit* printed 14 opinion pieces that linked studying at University of Ottawa to the survival of Ontario’s French-speaking Catholic minority. These editorials include: Unsigned, “L’université d’Ottawa”, 7/10/1914, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “M. Ferguson et l’Université d’Ottawa”, 8/21/1916, 3; J. Albert Foisy, “Pour nos garçons”, 8/16/1917, 3; Charles Gautier, “Ces attaques contre l’Université”, 5/28/1924, 3; and Camille L’Heureux, “En marge de ces fêtes”, 12/14/1931, 3.

¹⁰ Unsigned, “L’étude chez les jeunes”, 9/3/1913, 1.

“Les remparts de notre race”.¹¹ That being said, the organ’s association of higher education with the defense of Ontario’s French-speaking Catholic minority was most often done by focusing squarely upon the University of Ottawa. In fact, the daily described the unique importance of this institution in the very first editorial it printed espousing the value of pursuing a university education. “Élevons nos enfants” began by explaining that “(l)a nationalité canadienne-française est en butte à des persécutions atroces, dans l’Ontario surtout.”¹² It then stated that, although any thriving community needed to have well-educated farmers, artisans, industrialists and members of liberal professions, the province’s French-speaking Catholic minority was especially desperate for highly-educated university graduates to defend its rights. *Le Droit* explained that the Franco-Ontarian community required:

...des hommes instruits, très instruits, qui mettent leur nationalité au-dessus de l’or et des honneurs, des hommes qui puissent combattre dans le Parlement, plaider devant les tribunaux, conduire le peuple, guider ses efforts, grouper ses énergies, des hommes enfin qui seront à la nation ce qu’est le cerveau au corps.¹³

The editorial closed by imploring parents to sacrifice whatever was needed to allow their children to attend the University of Ottawa. This institution, it was stated, would transform them into the leaders Ontario’s minority French-speaking Catholic group needed to assure its survival. It was likewise argued in a later piece that the Oblate-run university was a training ground for those who would stop assimilationist threats. Parents, *Le Droit* contended, were therefore duty bound to send qualified children to the University of Ottawa to pursue their higher education.¹⁴ Doing so would not only afford the French-speaking Catholic population a crop of well-educated

¹¹ J. Albert Foisy, “Le blé qui lève”, 7/4/1917, 1; Charles Gautier, “Donnez-nous des hommes”, 10/6/1922, 3; and Fulgence Charpentier, “Les remparts de notre race”, 10/24/1924, 3.

¹² Unsigned, “Élevons nos enfants”, 7/8/1914, 1.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ J. Albert Foisy, “Pour l’éducation des garçons”, 6/21/1917, 1.

leaders but it would also safeguard the sustainability of an institution that was a cornerstone of the Franco-Ontarian community.¹⁵ “Une institution vitale” was even more emphatic in claiming that the University of Ottawa could produce the leaders the Ontario minority desperately required. It mentioned that it was best positioned to produce these elites: “(c)ette élite dont nous avons besoin dans tous les domaines, notre Université (d’Ottawa) la formera. Cette vie intense, intellectuelle et morale, nécessaire à notre rayonnement et à notre influence, elle nous la donnera, aussi abondante que nous la désirons.”¹⁶

The second most frequent content from the Subheading Higher Education focused on the educational pathways Quebec’s primary school graduates should consider in the hopes of finding rewarding careers if university studies were not an option. A total of 20 editorials appeared after 1918 encouraging recent graduates to pursue their education at a technical institute.¹⁷ Many of the editorials about the advantages of attending a technical institute stated that its graduates would be well-positioned to assume well-paying jobs in burgeoning industries starving for highly skilled labourers.¹⁸ A case in point, “L’École technique” explained how the old way of

¹⁵ Ibid. The organ mentioned in seven other editorials that the University of Ottawa, since it does not receive funding from the provincial government on par with unilingual English Protestant universities, needs to be dutifully supported by the French-speaking Catholic minority. The opinion pieces include: J. Albert Foisy, “C’est trop de délicatesse”, 1/19/1920, 3; Richard Léopold, “Aidons notre Université”, 8/23/1930, 3; and Charles Gautier, “Un appel de l’université”, 4/25/1931, 3.

¹⁶ Charles Gautier, “Une institution vitale”, 12/20/1930, 3.

¹⁷ The timing of this content coincided closely with the late 1910s push to launch a polytechnic school in Hull to prepare skilled labourers. After some brief building delays, the École Technique de Hull opened on October 31, 1924. It offered courses in a variety of manual trades to those who had completed the sixth grade and were at least 14 years old. Henri Lessard contributed 14 editorials to this topic. A much smaller number of editorials were printed about pursuing higher learning at a “collège classique”. These nine pieces recognised the value of the education these institutions provided, especially as they groomed many for university. This group of editorials includes: Unsigned, “L’enseignement populaire”, 8/28/1913, 1; Harry Bernard, “La formation classique”, 3/7/1921, 3; and Charles Gautier, “Nos collèges classiques”, 1/18/1928, 3. For more information about the educational choices of the era in Quebec, see Jean-Pierre Charland, *Histoire de l’éducation au Québec. De l’ombre du clocher à l’économie du savoir* (Saint-Laurent : Éditions du Renouveau pédagogique, 2005).

¹⁸ Eleven editorials make this case including: Thomas Poulin, “L’école technique”, 2/15/1921, 3; Henri Lessard, “Ouverture de l’école technique”, 9/9/1924, 4; Henri Lessard, “Vers l’école technique”, 8/5/1927, 4; and Henri Lessard, “Notre École Technique”, 2/27/1930, 4.

taking a few classes and being mentored on a worksite was no longer enough to secure a career in the trades.¹⁹ *Le Droit* published a similar editorial three years later when Hull's technical institute opened including one which asserted that its graduates, unlike typical tradesmen who learned their skills on worksites only, "...seraient avantagés, ils seraient tout à fait supérieurs, à la connaissance pratique (sic) de leur métier (sic), ils pouvaient joindre (sic) le savoir théorique" which would allow them to fill any job opening "...et la capacité d'en prendre la charge."²⁰ The idea that learning applied skills and theoretical curriculum in a classroom setting was the only way to truly master a trade was reintroduced two years later. In this case it was stated:

L'école technique a précisément pour but de mieux préparer les jeunes gens aux carrières manuelles. Par son enseignement à la fois théorique et pratique, qui développe leurs facultés intellectuelles et leur habileté physique, les rendant par conséquent plus aptes que les autres à avoir de l'initiative, elle les met en mesure de se placer plus facilement, d'obtenir des postes supérieurs, de partir même à leur compte une exploitation du métier appris.²¹

Le Droit used the difficult economic conditions of the early 1930s to yet again promote enrollment in the École Technique de Hull. It mentioned that economic circumstances were making finding good jobs increasingly difficult and that it was especially tough for men to find openings in office-settings, banks, retail, and the civil service as these had increasingly become the domain of female workers.²² Young men should recognise that, in many cases, "...l'élément féminin leur fait une concurrence qui ne pourra que devenir de plus en plus forte."²³ The smart

¹⁹ Thomas Poulin, "L'école technique", 12/7/1921, 4.

²⁰ Henri Lessard, "Ouverture de l'école technique", 9/9/1924, 4.

²¹ "L'école technique". 8/31/26, 4.

²² Henri Lessard, "Vers l'Enseignement Technique", 4/12/1930, 4.

²³ Ibid.

choice was heading towards sectors where few women toiled and work remained abundant.²⁴

Studying at a technical institute was a recommended pathway into a labour force where women remained largely excluded.

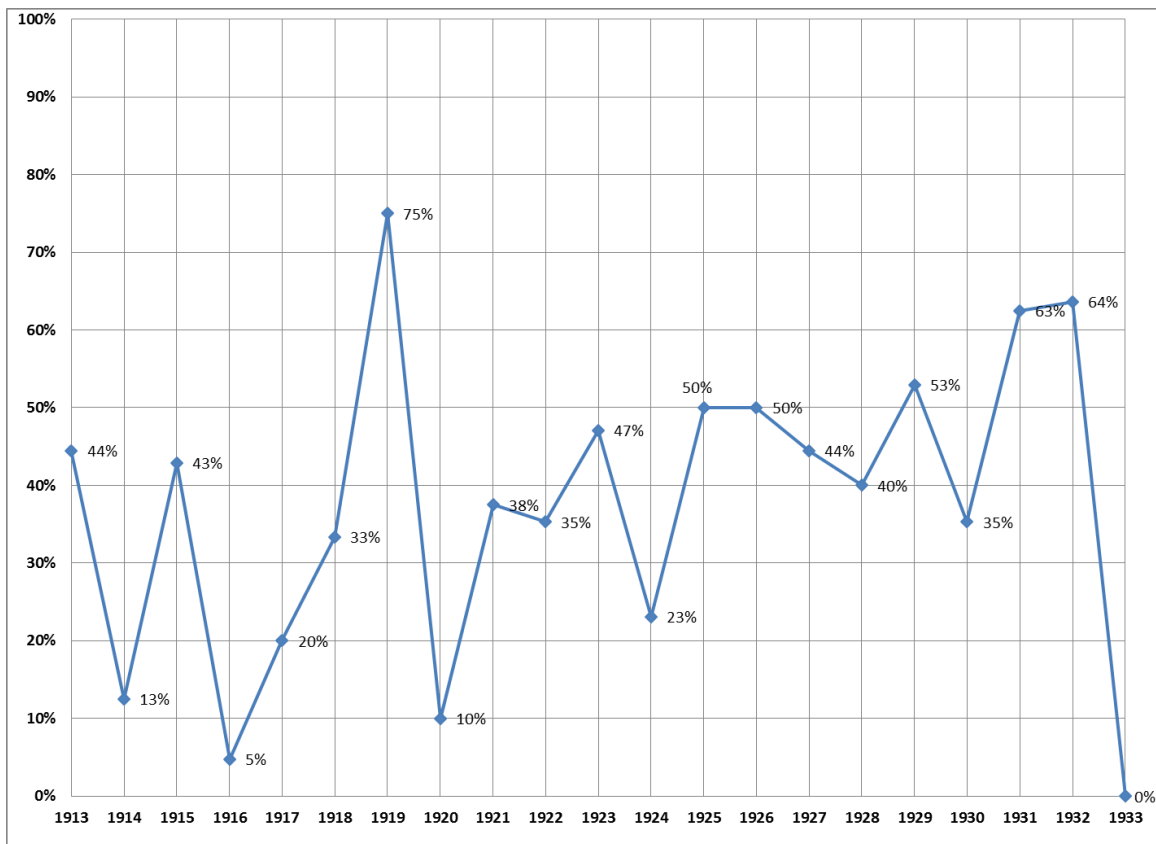
General Topic Education—Subheading Early Education

The Subheading Early Education, with 86 editorials, was the second most important theme in the General Topic Education. (See Appendix F: General Topic Education and its Subheadings per year) This material, unlike the content in the Subheading Higher Education which encouraged particular educational pathways, spoke about the importance of gaining a basic education. Over a dozen editorial writers contributed content about this topic. Henri Lessard was the most prolific with 47 pieces.²⁵ As shown in the figure below, the Subheading Early Education was often the most prevalent theme in this General Topic. It represented at least half of its content in nine different years.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ He was followed by Charles Gautier (16) and J. Albert Foisy (7). Lessard's impressive contribution may have been because Lessard was the lead editorialist of page four content which, as mentioned in Chapter Two, focused on themes of special interest to readers from the Quebec-side of the Ottawa River. The issue of educating the young was particularly prescient for this population for various socio-economic and cultural reasons. For more on this matter, see Pierre Savard, "Relations avec le Québec" in *Les Franco-Ontariens*, Cornelius J. Jaenen, ed., (Ottawa : Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1993), 231-264.

**Figure 18: Editorial content in the General Topic Education
from the Subheading Early Education**



The greatest number of editorials in this Subheading focused on encouraging young people to attend school. While 18 editorials delved into the issue of whether the State should make elementary and secondary schooling compulsory, a related 25 pieces implored parents to send their kids to school as soon as classes opened and to keep them enrolled well into their teenage years. Material about the former was opportune as provincial governments wrestled with the issue of compelling children and juveniles to attend school. This was a thorny subject as it meant superseding a parent's right to decide what was best for their children. The Ontario government had taken a modest step in this direction in 1891 by making schooling obligatory for those between the ages of eight and fourteen. It skirted this delicate issue for the next three decades

until it passed the Adolescent School Attendance Act in 1921 which raised the high school leaving age to seventeen.²⁶ The situation in Quebec was quite different as mandatory schooling was seen by most as anathema to the sanctity of parental rights.²⁷ Compulsory school attendance consequently remained unpopular there for much of the first half of the twentieth-century even though it was instituted in different degrees in the rest of Canada.²⁸ The Ottawa-based newspaper broadcast its opinion on this matter quite frequently during its first decade in print.²⁹ *Le Droit* steadfastly supported a system where parents decided their children's schooling practices. The daily oftentimes made the case that a voluntary system was as good, if not better, than a compulsory approach. Much of its argument rested on noting that enrolment rates in a voluntary system were at least comparable to those where education was mandated by government. "Comparaison intéressante" from 1915 presented this position. Quebec should not, it mentioned, follow other jurisdictions that had compulsory childhood education as enrollment figures were at least as high there where parents maintained the right to decide their children's educational pathway. The piece presented the latest statistics from the 1912-1913 school year revealing that

²⁶ Schull, *Ontario since 1867*, 241. For more about the issue of compulsory education in Ontario, see Philip Oreopoulos, "Canadian Compulsory School Laws and their Impact on Educational Attainment and Future Earnings" (University of Toronto: Family and Labour Studies Division—Statistics Canada and Department of Economics, 2005).

²⁷ The Church led the charge against State-imposed mandatory education regulations. For instance, Archbishop Louis-Nazaire Bégin, the leader of the Quebec Catholic Church from 1898 to 1925, made several public pronouncements up to the early 1920s against any attempt to remove the right for parents to choose when to send their children to school. Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon. *Histoire du catholicisme québécois, Tome I : 1898-1940* (Saint-Laurent : Boréal Express, 1984), 247.

²⁸ The Quebec government made its first attempt at making education for children mandatory in 1901. The proposed legislation was a dismal failure as members of the provincial Parliament voted it down 55-7. Linteau, et. al, *Quebec: A History, 1867-1929*, 464. It was the last province to enact compulsory education legislation. Quebec passed a law in 1943 making education mandatory for those between five and sixteen years of age. Leaders of Quebec's Catholic Church were finally forced to acquiesce as Pope Pius XI had already made education compulsory in Vatican City in 1931. Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher and Jean-Claude Robert. *Quebec since 1930* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1991), 66.

²⁹ All but four of the 18 editorials on the matter were printed before its tenth anniversary in March, 1923. The passing of the Adolescent School Attendance Act in 1921 may have contributed to *Le Droit's* loss of interest with this topic as it put the matter to rest for Ontarians. The editorials which appeared before March, 1923 include: Omer Héroux, "L'école obligatoire", 12/5/1913, 1; J. Albert Foisy, "L'obligation scolaire", 1/23/1919, 1; and Thomas Poulin, "Une réponse", 9/3/1921, 4. Some of those after are: Henri Lessard, "Ce que cela signifie", 9/7/1923, 4; and Fulgence Charpentier, "Les Canadiens français à l'école", 11/6/1924, 3.

Ontario's enrollment and attendance figures lagged behind Quebec.³⁰ These numbers, *Le Droit* contended, should convince people not to denigrate the voluntary approach and, by consequence, Quebec "...peut se vanter d'obtenir de meilleurs résultats en respectant la liberté d'un chacun et en rendant justice à tout le monde."³¹ Harry Bernard used a similar tactic in a 1921 opinion piece. In this case, he compared participation rates and academic outcomes in Quebec against those from several other jurisdictions where childhood education was compulsory, including British Columbia which was "...(une) province qui se targue d'un régime scolaire extra-moderne et perfectionné...".³² Bernard explained that results from these countries and other Canadian provinces were in the main very disappointing. He proclaimed that his findings showed that obligatory education was not a panacea given that forcing children to attend classes could not compel them to learn. Bernard closed by arguing for the continuation of the voluntary system:

En face de tels faits bien précis, comment peut-on prôner encore l'instruction obligatoire. Non seulement elle tend à supplanter les parents dans leur rôle d'éducateurs, mais elle n'a aucune valeur bien établie dans le domaine purement pratique. L'instruction obligatoire est un leurre, et ceux-là qui ne s'y laissent pas prendre seront toujours les plus intelligents.³³

An opinion piece that appeared the following year about a report written by C. J. Magnan, Quebec's Catholic School Inspector General, relied on the same argument. It opened by mentioning that Magnan's *Éclairons la route; à la lumière des statistiques, des faits et des principes, réponse à The Right Track, publié à Toronto et traitant de l'Instruction obligatoire dans la Province de Québec* was written in response to a recently published book out of Toronto

³⁰ Pierre du Pont, "Comparaison intéressante", 4/24/1915, 1.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Bernard focused on the education systems of France, Hungary, the United-States, Portugal, Spain, and Italy. "De l'instruction obligatoire", 4/11/1921, 3.

³³ Ibid.

criticizing Quebec's voluntary education system.³⁴ Magnan's work seemingly presented irrefutable evidence debunking the alleged superiority of the compulsory education approach used in other Canadian provinces. Meanwhile findings from a few international case studies featured in *Éclairons la route* all but attested "... (que) l'instruction obligatoire a été un fiasco. L'obligation scolaire ne forme pas plus de lettrés que la prohibition n'engendre de tempérants."³⁵ Magnan's work, *Le Droit* asserted, should prove once and for all that Quebec had the right approach all along. The rest of Canada would be wise to seriously consider doing away with compulsory childhood education.

Although *Le Droit* opposed having the State force children to attend school, it virulently encouraged schooling for the young. Parents were incessantly told that sending their children to school at the earliest age possible and, more importantly, ensuring they kept up their studies well into their teen years was imperative.³⁶ Many of these editorials appeared on a yearly basis just prior to the beginning of classes. For instance, 1915's "L'ouverture des classes" asked parents to ensure their children were in school on the first day of classes in September. Doing so, the newspaper argued, sends a strong message to youngsters about the value of academic learning.³⁷ Marc Marchessault, who had a brief one-month stint as an editorialist at *Le Droit*, presented a similar argument a few weeks before school started in 1921. He noted that unfortunately a great many unenlightened parents "...ne songent-ils pas ou n'ont-ils pas déjà décidé de garder avec eux le plus vieux, à peine âgé de quatorze ans parfois, pour aider au soutien de la famille ?"³⁸

³⁴ Charles Gautier, "Éclairons la route", 6/1/1922, 3.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Twenty-five editorials argue these points including: J. Albert Foisy, "Préparez vos enfants", 8/22/1917, 1; Henri Lessard, "La rentrée des classes", 8/28/1923, 4; Henri Lessard, "Où vont les enfants ?", 4/16/1927, 4; and Henri Lessard, "Nos statistiques scolaires", 9/23/1930, 4.

³⁷ Unsigned, "L'ouverture des classes", 8/30/1915, 5.

³⁸ Marc Marchessault, "L'ouverture des classes", 8/8/1921, 2.

Doing so was regrettable as teenagers needed to be in school as they were just beginning to develop their adult psyche. Parents who took their children out of school during such a crucial developmental stage were in essence robbing them of the intellectual tools they needed to succeed in life.³⁹

Henri Lessard was the lead advocate of this argument over the next 13 years. He authored almost yearly late summer editorials about the importance of sending kids to school as soon as classes opened and for as long as possible.⁴⁰ He began his August 6, 1926 “La reprise des classes” by mentioning that at this time of year some parents might wonder if it was alright to keep their older children at home because “...(beaucoup) de familles sont pauvres et comptent sur eux pour gagner quelques dollars par semaine.”⁴¹ Lessard rejected this argument out of the conviction that doing so would cause long-term harm to these children. He remained steadfast in his belief on the matter even when the tough economic times of the early 1930s compelled many parents to withdraw older children from school to supplement the household income. This approach, he asserted, was flawed as inexperienced younger workers were unlikely to find any paid work when unemployment was rampant.⁴² Furthermore, adding more hands to the labour market only increased competition for very limited openings. Difficult economic conditions should “...inciter les parents à envoyer plus longtemps à l’école leurs garçons et filles, qui ne trouvent pas à se placer (dans le marché du travail) aussi facilement et aussi tôt (sic) qu’autrefois.”⁴³

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ These editorials include: “La rentrée des classes”. 8/28/1923, 4; “Les classes vont ouvrir”. 8/27/1927, 4; “En vue de septembre”. 7/30/1929, 4; and “La reprise des classes”. 8/1/1931, 4.

⁴¹ Henri Lessard, “La reprise des classes”, 8/6/1926, 4.

⁴² Henri Lessard, “Il y a plus d’écoliers”, 8/27/1932, 4.

⁴³ Ibid.

Le Droit coupled its pro-education crusade with a campaign in favour of measures to promote academic excellence. The Subheading Early Education included 11 editorials encouraging initiatives that foster student engagement and success. These pieces focused on incentivizing pupils to apply themselves in their studies by rewarding academic achievements.⁴⁴ “Des récompenses”, for example, lauded the Hull chapter of La fédération des femmes canadiennes-françaises’s fundraising initiative to honour meritorious students at the end of the school year. *Le Droit* was convinced that handing out awards for academic excellence taught pupils that hard work in the classroom had tangible rewards.⁴⁵ The community should not only support this initiative but the broader approach ought to “...devenir un article permanent au chapitre de nos activités sociales.”⁴⁶ A similar editorial in mid-December 1921 encouraged parents to buy Christmas gifts that promoted curiosity and learning. It argued that stimulating a love of learning was especially crucial at a time when society had many diversions which undermined intellectual pursuits:

La génération qui pousse serait-elle moins sérieuse, moins adonnée au travail de l’intelligence, moins susceptible de plaisirs intellectuels que les précédentes ? La vie facile d’aujourd’hui, les amusements de toute sorte qui se trouvent à chaque pas dans nos grandes et petites villes, concourt évidemment à l’affaiblissement de l’éducation de nos enfants et de nos jeunes gens.⁴⁷

Le Droit believed parents, by buying gifts with educational merit, could foster a learning culture in young people which would promote their scholastic success.⁴⁸ The daily remained committed to supporting programs to reward school success even as economic conditions soured in the early

⁴⁴ These editorials include: J. Albert Foisy, “Préparez vos enfants”, 8/22/1917, 1; Henri Lessard, “Nos progrès scolaires”, 8/14/1924, 4; Henri Lessard, “La scolarité”, 3/18/1929, 4; and Henri Lessard, “Au travail”, 1/8/1932, 4.

⁴⁵ Thomas Poulin, “Des récompenses”, 2/25/1921, 4.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Charles Gautier, “Les étrennes”, 12/16/1921, 4.

⁴⁸ Picture books and reading materials were mentioned as especially beneficial. Ibid.

1930s. For example, it criticized the proposal tabled by school commissioners to curtail the end-of-the-school year awards program to reduce operating expenses. Although it was understandable to do so as schools were having difficulty covering their expenses, the organ believed that every effort should be made to ensure the program remained in place as “(c)e serait vraiment pénible que les classes se ferment sans quelques cérémonies publiques et sans remise de quelques récompenses.”⁴⁹

It must be recognized that the daily promoted student engagement and educational achievement not simply because it provided a foundation for individual success. *Le Droit* oftentimes supported this position because it believed Ontario’s French-speaking Catholic minority had much to gain from the academic success of its youth. In short, the newspaper printed a dozen pieces from 1913 to 1931 mentioning that taking advantage of elementary and secondary education greatly improved the minority’s chances of surviving in a predominately English-speaking Protestant province.⁵⁰ This position first appeared in August, 1913’s “Une société modèle” which urged French-Canadian organizations in Ontario to encourage educational initiatives for young people.⁵¹ The piece then mentioned how La société l’assomption, an Acadian mutual aid society launched at the turn of the century, recently added a new program to support the education of young girls. This type of project, the piece argued, benefited the participants and had the secondary effect of bolstering the community for generations to come.⁵² It was a bold but necessary step to ensure the survival of Acadians.

⁴⁹ Henri Lessard, “Pas de prix cette année”, 2/14/1931, 4.

⁵⁰ The twelve editorials include: Unsigned, “Une œuvre nationale”, 7/21/1914, 3; Charles Gautier, “L’école de pédagogie”, 3/11/1923, 3; Charles Gautier, “Le choix des institutrices”, 7/22/1924, 3; and Henri Lessard, “Autre terme de labeur”, 1/5/1931, 4.

⁵¹ Unsigned, “Une société modèle”, 8/26/1913, 1.

⁵² Ibid.

French-Canadian associations, *Le Droit* believed, should replicate this approach by developing similar programs. A September, 1915 editorial touched upon this strategy in the context of the conditions faced by Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority. It applauded parents who planned to send their children to school when classes opened. These parents "...ont travaillé pour l'avenir des leurs enfant et de leur nationalité; nous ne saurions trop les en féliciter."⁵³ Their obligation was only just beginning since they also needed to ensure their offspring succeed in their studies throughout the school year. Readers were told to do all that was required to support their young:

...il est votre devoir de suivre attentivement leurs progrès.
Vous devez savoir si vos enfants profitent bien des leçons
de l'instituteur ou de l'institutrice et pour cela il faut les
suivre attentivement. Il n'est pas moindre que vous
fassiez bien travailler vos enfants à la maison.⁵⁴

This type of parental support, *Le Droit* was convinced, ensured that French-speaking Catholic children reap all the benefits of their education. It also greatly benefited Ontario's minority group as these well-educated youths could help it withstand assimilationist threats.⁵⁵ Sending these children to school, the editorial mentioned, had multiple benefits since "(l)'instruction est le meilleur héritage qu'un père puisse laisser a ses enfants. C'est aussi la plus solide richesse d'un peuple et d'une nation."⁵⁶ It further explained in great detail how sending children to school enriched the province's minority:

Nous sommes en ce pays une minorité, fière de son origine,
fière de son histoire, fière de ses œuvres. Nous ne préserverons
notre réputation et nous garderons notre influence qu'en
substituant à la force du nombre qui nous sera longtemps
encore refusé, une supériorité morale et intellectuelle qui
constitue la véritable grandeur. Cette supériorité, nos enfants

⁵³ Pierre du Pont, "Quelques conseils utiles", 9/17/1915, 5.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Charles Gautier, "La rentrée des classes", 8/31/1925, 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

l'obtiendront en fréquentant d'abord les écoles primaires où ils recevront une instruction catholique, française et bilingue.⁵⁷

Attending school guaranteed that young people developed the competencies which would help them succeed, while it also encouraged the vibrancy of the province's Franco-Ontarian population.⁵⁸ These correlated outcomes, the organ contended, were instrumental to the long-term survival of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority.

General Topic Education—Subheading Lifelong Learning

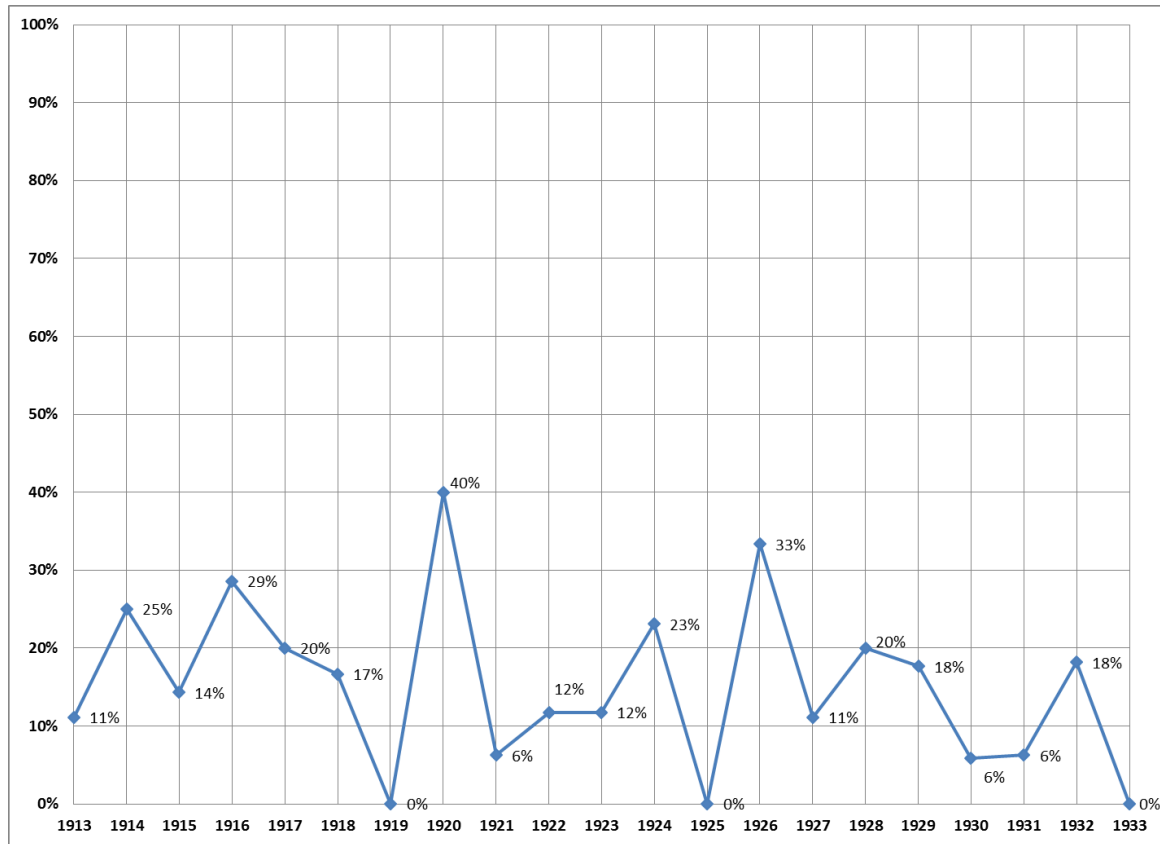
Le Droit's campaign to ensure that Franco-Ontarians were well-educated was not solely aimed at children and youth. Members of the minority group were encouraged to at least complete elementary school as it would provide the basic skills vital in increasingly urban industrial conditions. The newspaper also hoped that many would pursue post-secondary studies to access the most rewarding and well-paid careers. Bettering oneself by taking advantage of educational opportunities, *Le Droit* believed, was a never-ending responsibility. The Subheading Lifelong Learning includes content promoting the value of learning opportunities, either on academic or professional development themes, for adults. This subject represents the smallest share of editorial content in the General Topic Education. Only 35 opinion pieces were written about these matters.⁵⁹ The Subheading ranked second overall nine times and last eleven times. (Appendix F: General Topic Education and its Subheadings per year) Aside from 1916, 1920 and 1926, the Subheading Lifelong Learning generally stayed below the quarter mark.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Charles Gautier argued in this editorial how sending these kids to school to develop their mastery of French had, aside from being part of their heritage, "...assurera en plus la persistance de notre caractère national et religieux". Ibid.

⁵⁹ Henri Lessard offered the most editorials on this matter (14), followed by Charles Gautier (8), and J. Edmond Cloutier (3).

**Figure 19: Editorial content in the General Topic Education
from the Subheading Lifelong Learning**



The editorial content in this Subheading falls into three categories. First, a cluster of pieces promoted professional development for those in the labour force. *Le Droit* printed 15 of those.⁶⁰ The first eight were written for agriculturalist. For instance, “La culture pratique” explained that agriculture should be considered a science and that those who refused to innovate “...est sûr de marcher à la ruine.”⁶¹ It was then noted that conferences showcasing advancements in agricultural practices were rightfully gaining popularity. *Le Droit* believed that attending these instructional events “(est) un excellent moyen pour les cultivateurs de se mettre au courant des

⁶⁰ These editorials include: Unsigned, “Le coût de la vie”, 2/12/1914, 1; J. Edmond Cloutier, “Science agricole et culture pratique”, 11/13/1920, 3; Henri Lessard, “Le cercle d’étude ouvrier”, 11/10/1922, 4; and Charles Gautier, “Le congrès agricole”, 3/16/1929, 3.

⁶¹ Unsigned, “La culture pratique”, 8/26/1913, 1.

méthodes nouvelles et de suivre la marche du progrès.”⁶² The same argument was used in a subsequent editorial targeting dairy producers. It noted that many of the prizes at agricultural fairs in the past year, including awards for butter and other milk products, had been won by French-speaking farmers from Quebec and Ontario.⁶³ Their accomplishments, it was argued, was largely due to the fact that they had embraced the latest scientific practices.⁶⁴ *Le Droit* hoped that these recent successes would convince everyone to adopt these innovative methods as doing so promised “...(de) pousser nos gens dans la voie du réel et solide progrès.”⁶⁵ J. Edmond Cloutier was responsible for penning the last piece promoting the professional development of the farming class. He asserted in “Science agricole et culture pratique” that agriculture was much more complex than could be expected. To be a successful farmer, one must have a good understanding of several scientific disciplines including “(l)a chimie, la botanique, la géologie, la zoologie.”⁶⁶ Luckily for yeomen, the government sponsored several conferences and other learning events. Those in this industry were duty bound to take advantage of these professional development opportunities to ensure they had the requisite knowledge to be successful.⁶⁷

Six of the remaining seven editorials flaunting the advantages of adult professional development targeted manual labourers or those in skilled trades.⁶⁸ Although the audience was different, *Le Droit* used similar arguments to encourage competency building. “Le cercle d’études ouvrier” broached this topic by lauding the return of a study group in Hull for manual

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Unsigned, “L’industrie laitière”, 9/19/1914, 1.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ J. Edmond Cloutier, “Science agricole et culture pratique”, 11/13/1920, 3.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ These pieces include: Henri Lessard, “La nécessité de l’étude”, 8/29/1923, 4; Henri Lessard, “Des cours utiles”, 9/3/1926, 4; and Henri Lessard, “Des cours avantageux”, 9/18/1929, 4.

labourers.⁶⁹ This union-sponsored initiative allowed those with limited formal schooling to upgrade their basic skills. The organ was confident that those who enrolled in the study group would be well-rewarded. According to the editorial, previous participants:

...sont tout désignés pour devenir les chefs du mouvement syndical catholique et national. Leur formation, leur avènement, est un des buts les plus précis du cercle d'études. On n'atteindra jamais bien l'ouvrier que par l'ouvrier. D'autre part, le guide, le chef, doit s'attirer la confiance par un certain savoir, une compétence suffisante à donner des mots d'ordre bien pesés, qui courent toutes les chances d'être suivis, en un mot à faire besogne de direction.⁷⁰

The last editorial encouraging manual labourers to access professional development programs mentioned how their increasing popularity had spawned a multitude of interesting choices. It noted that over a dozen courses were currently available to those wishing to acquire or perfect employment-related skills.⁷¹ Those who made the sacrifice to enrol in these programs "...auront une double satisfaction : une satisfaction immédiate d'acquérir à chaque leçon des connaissances utiles, voire indispensables, et celle de penser qu'ils travaillent à l'amélioration éventuelle de leur sort."⁷²

The second group of opinion pieces in the Subheading Lifelong Learning focused on initiatives to enhance the basic literacy and numeracy skills of young adults. *Le Droit* printed 11 editorials about this matter starting in 1916 with "Les cours du soir".⁷³ It noted how evening classes were highly beneficial for those who had not completed their early schooling and, consequently, did not have the essential skills to succeed in life. The teachers who offered these

⁶⁹ Henri Lessard, "Le cercle d'études ouvrier", 11/10/1922, 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Henri Lessard, "Des cours avantageux", 9/18/1929, 4.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ These editorials include: Charles Gautier, "Les cours du soir", 8/28/1916, 1; Charles Gautier, "L'instruction chez les jeunes", 10/18/1916, 1; Charles Gautier, "Les cours du soir", 9/24/1920, 3; and Henri Lessard, "Reprise des activités", 9/17/1928, 4.

classes were “(chargés) d’inculquer à leurs élèves les connaissances, dont la possession les aidera à réussir dans la vie.”⁷⁴ The remainder of these pieces similarly pointed out that attending evening classes was essential to individual success. For instance, a subsequent editorial heralding the launch of registrations for evening classes noted:

(t)ous les jeunes gens dont la situation ne permet pas de faire un cours primaire supérieur devraient donc compenser cette lacune, en donnant quelques instants de leur jeunesse à l’étude de connaissances dont ils ont un besoin immédiat pour se frayer un chemin vers une position honorable.⁷⁵

This argument was reiterated in an editorial praising the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste’s evening educational offerings. This association, it was mentioned, provided these courses not as a replacement for attending primary or secondary school but for those with inadequate competencies because they had left school early.⁷⁶ The public needed to support the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste “...qui permet à plusieurs des nôtres de réussir dans le monde, de se créer un avenir brillant.”⁷⁷ The crux of these opinion pieces focused on the importance of filling educational gaps so that people had the best opportunity to succeed.

The last group of editorials from the Subheading Lifelong Learning comprises nine opinion pieces promoting adult learning in general. The argument was made that lifelong learning was crucial as it stimulated the mind and allowed people to gain insight into a broad range of topics.⁷⁸ Harry Bernard mentioned these points by stating that anyone with a decent level of formal education, even university graduates, should not consider they had “atteint le

⁷⁴ Charles Gautier, “Les cours du soir”, 8/28/1916, 1.

⁷⁵ Charles Gautier, “Les cours du soir”, 10/3/1916, 1.

⁷⁶ Charles Gautier, “Les cours du soir”, 10/14/1924, 3.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ These opinion pieces include: J. Edmond Cloutier, “Réunion des chefs”, 12/7/1920, 3; Henri Lessard, “Activités intellectuelles”, 2/25/1929, 4; and Henri Lessard, “Et les cours du soir ?”, 1/9/1932, 4.

summum des connaissances humaines.”⁷⁹ According to him, what someone learned in their formative years was only a foundation that needed to be supplemented throughout their life. Intellectual curiosity had to be nurtured on an ongoing basis as new topics of interest emerged.⁸⁰ A piece delving into learning opportunities provided by local organisations had the same viewpoint. It was mentioned that the symposiums and conferences offered by the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste, l’Association catholique de la jeunesse canadienne-française or the Cercle catholique des voyageurs de commerce were very beneficial as they supported a learning culture “...de nature à se traduire en actes, pour le meilleur bien de la ville, de la société, de notre race.”⁸¹ The entire community benefited from initiatives that supported lifelong learning as the public gained insight into emerging topics. In 1931 *Le Droit* drew attention to yearly conferences presented by University of Ottawa for the general public. La société des conférences, it maintained, has had such fantastic success since launching in 1923 that it could now be thought of as “...un centre d’intellectualité reconnu pour tout le Canada français.”⁸² The variety of the programs it had on offer was perfect “...pour soutenir l’intérêt du public intellectuel qui n’arrive pas à ménager ses encouragements.”⁸³ The organ implored readers to support this wonderful initiative either by attending the sessions or by donating to its sponsoring organisation. Doing so ensures that such a powerful initiative remained a pillar of the community.

General Topic Family—Subheading Gender Roles

The content above shows that *Le Droit* was convinced that having a good education delivered personal as well as communal benefits. Many of the newspaper’s editorials about

⁷⁹ Harry Bernard, “La culture post-scolaire”, 7/17/1922, 3.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Henri Lessard, “La vie dans nos organisations”, 9/6/1923, 4.

⁸² Léopold Richer, “La société des conférences de l’Université”, 10/10/1931, 3.

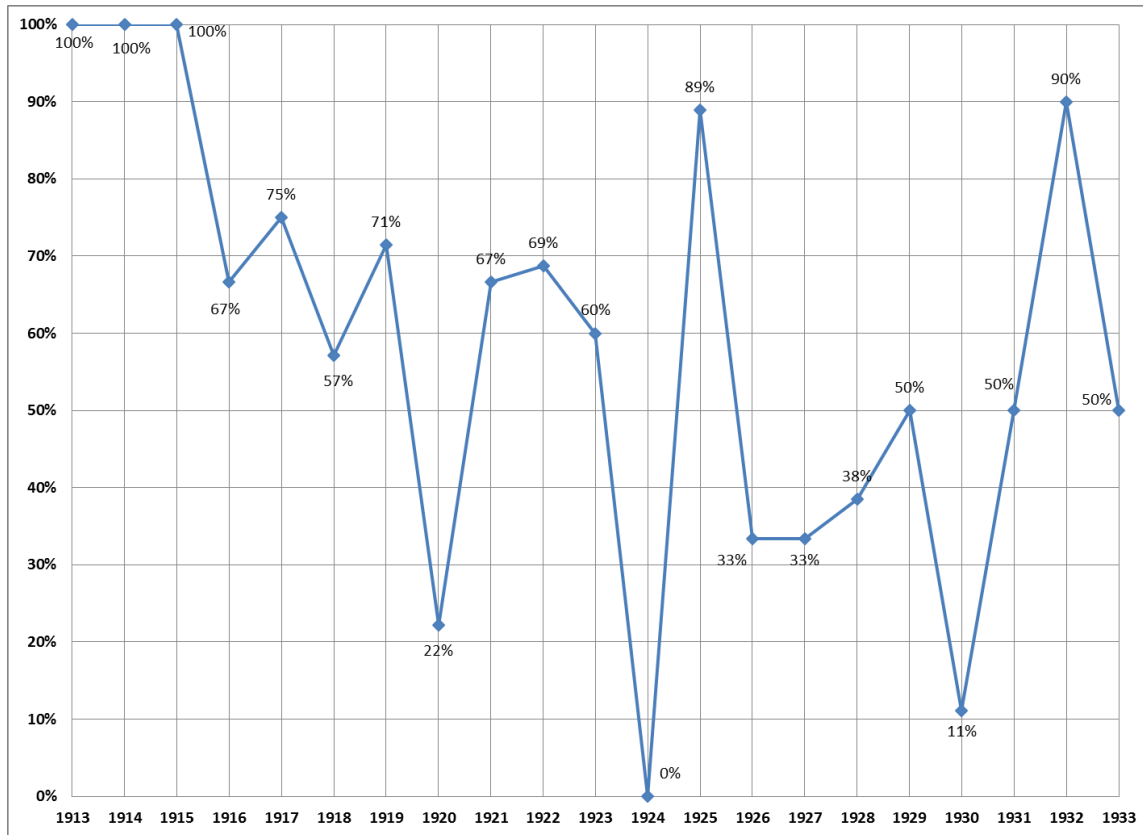
⁸³ Ibid.

family matters were presented as having the same twofold advantages. Readers were similarly told that respecting traditional gender roles, protecting the sanctity of wedlock, and having large families would provide individual happiness and create a prosperous and stable community. The General Topic Family represented a small share of the material in *Le Droit*'s editorial pages. This theme only eclipsed the three percent mark twice and was below the one percent mark five other times. It resultantly ranked near or at the bottom in a greater majority of years. In fact, it ranked ninth six times and last twelve times. (See Appendix C: General Topics per Year by Percentage and Appendix D: General Topics per Year by Rank) Although certainly not a very prominent theme, *Le Droit* nevertheless consistently printed editorials about this subject throughout its initial two decades.⁸⁴ The 174 pieces can be divided into three subjects with the Subheading Gender Roles representing the lion share of the material.⁸⁵ It ranked first 16 times and second four times, while only ranking last once. (See Appendix G: General Topic Family and its Subheadings per year) As shown in Figure 20, the Subheading Gender Roles represented a majority of the General Topic Family in fifteen different years.

⁸⁴ Henri Lessard contributed the most editorials (28), followed by J. Albert Foisy (15), and Charles Gautier (13).

⁸⁵ A total of 105 editorials were printed about this matter from 1913 to 1933.

**Figure 20: Editorial content in the General Topic Family
from the Subheading Gender Roles**



The issue of giving voting rights to women provoked several surges in content in this Subheading. For instance, the Ontario government's decision in early 1917 to extend voting rights to females at least 21 years old was met by a number of *Le Droit* editorials.⁸⁶ The federal government's enactment later that same year of the War Time Election Act granting suffrage rights to women with husbands or sons in active duty generated the same response from the organ.⁸⁷ The federal government's subsequent extension in 1918 of voting rights to all women

⁸⁶ The Act to amend the Ontario Election Act was passed on April 12, 1917. Women could not, however, sit in the legislature.

⁸⁷ The War-time Elections Act of September 20, 1917 applied "Generally to women who were: a) British subjects; b) otherwise qualified as to age, race and residence; and c) the wife, widow, mother, sister or daughter of any person in the naval forces (inside or outside Canada) or any person in the military forces (outside Canada) who was serving or served with Canada or Great Britain (only until demobilization)."

21 years or older once again led the daily to print editorials on this matter.⁸⁸ Lastly, a sharp upsurge in the number of editorials occurred when women had their first opportunity to cast a ballot in the provincial or federal elections. This happened in the fall of 1919 as Ontarians headed to the polls and likewise in 1921 as Canadians voted in a general election.

Le Droit's steadfast support of traditional gender constructs similarly held by a majority of people at that time underscored these event-driven content increases. In brief, those at the organ subscribed to the belief that men and women had prescribed roles in society with clearly delineated and separate spheres of influence.⁸⁹ According to this view, it was believed that men were better-suited for the paid labour force, the world of politics, economy, commerce, and law. The organ printed just under a dozen editorials about the proper role for men.⁹⁰ For instance, 1913's "Ayons du caractère" explained that French-speaking Catholic men should use their innate strength of character and natural courage to lead the charge to stop provincial officials who threatened their Franco-Ontarian minority rights.⁹¹ It was further mentioned that "true men" were needed to lead the fight against this menace. The newspaper printed parts of a speech given by a priest at a local event to embolden Franco-Ontarian men to take the charge. The piece included:

Ce qui fait l'homme par-dessus tout, c'est la force de la
volonté ; là es son énergie vraiment originale. La volonté
c'est la grande puissance virile ; la volonté c'est le royaume
de l'homme, la volonté, c'est l'homme lui-même.⁹²

⁸⁸ The Act to confer the Electoral Franchise upon Women was enacted on May 24, 1918.

⁸⁹ For more on the topic of separate spheres based on gender, see Ruth Roach Pierson, editor. *Canadian Women's Issues. Vol. 1: Strong Voices* (Halifax: James Lorimer, 1993) and Alison Prentice, et al., editors. *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1996).

⁹⁰ It is interesting to note that ten of the 11 opinion pieces appeared before 1922. Only one more editorial outlining the role of men was printed after that year. Some of these editorials include: "Votre devoir, parent". 4/5/1913, 1; "Ce que peut une élite". 2/7/1914, 1; and "Les associations de pères de famille". 3/14/1925, 3.

⁹¹ Unsigned, "Ayons du caractère", 6/16/1913, 1.

⁹² Ibid.

The argument in this editorial demonstrates that those at the organ believed that the natural gifts of men uniquely positioned them to lead the campaign against assimilation. “Soyons des hommes” which appeared three months later was a clarion call for Franco-Ontarian men with strong convictions and unbending principles to stand up against attempts to erode their rights. How many of them, it wondered, were willing to use their natural attributes to lead this crucial campaign.⁹³

The remainder of editorials about the role of males focused on explaining their place in the family. More specifically, six editorials appeared from 1914 onward arguing that men were the rightful heads of the household. Gustave de Lennel, for one, contended that parents must impart the importance of education on their children: “(l)e père de famille, qui est le chef de la maison, doit être le modèle et précède son épouse et ses enfants en leur donnant le bon exemple.”⁹⁴ As such, the male head of household must set a good example for his charges and his spouse. *Le Droit* printed five editorials between 1917 and 1922 contending that men had an exalted place in the family. This content typically appeared in the few days before the New Year. These editorials provided words of encouragement for the year to come and, most importantly, encouraged families to uphold the French-speaking Catholic “bénédiction paternelle” tradition. This custom was expected to take place on the morning of January 1. In brief, family members were to kneel in front of the male head of the household to receive his blessing on behalf of God

⁹³ Unsigned, “Soyons des hommes”, 9/29/1913, 1.

⁹⁴ Gustave de Lennel, “L’éducation et le bon exemple”, 12/2/1914, 1.

for the year to come.⁹⁵ *Le Droit* was resolute that this custom should be maintained even though social conditions were changing rapidly:

Nous souhaitons qu'en ce vingtième siècle, comme dans le siècle passé, les enfants soient heureux d'accourir en foule au foyer paternel, en ce premier jour de l'année, pour s'agenouiller devant le chef de famille et lui demander de faire descendre sur eux la bénédiction du Ciel.⁹⁶

In the minds of those at the organ, males who were the natural heads of the household had a privileged role to play which extended in some instance to spiritual matters.

The eleven editorials stressing the distinct and, for all intents and purposes, superior role of men in society pale in comparison the 79 pieces about the proper place of women. This material unwaveringly claimed that females were perfectly suited to oversee all things related to domestic life, including child-rearing, managing the household budget, and housekeeping.⁹⁷ Much of this early content made the case that the increasingly prevalent practice of females seeking paid work in office settings was harmful as it eroded a woman's affinity for homemaking tasks and, consequently, undermined her desire to assume her natural role as a wife and stay-at-home mother.⁹⁸ The organ concurrently published a series of editorials sanctioning educational opportunities for females to learn to be successful homemakers.⁹⁹ "Une bonne et ancienne maison" noted that it was important to choose wisely when considering where young

⁹⁵ These editorials are: J. Albert Foisy, "Pour la Nouvel An", 12/29/1917, 1; J. Albert Foisy, "La Bénédiction", 12/28/1918, 1; J. Albert Foisy, "Bonne et Heureuse Année", 12/31/1918, 1; J. Albert Foisy, "La Nouvelle Année", 12/31/1919, 1; and Henri Lessard, "La bénédiction paternelle", 12/30/1922, 4.

⁹⁶ J. Albert Foisy, "Bonne et Heureuse Année", 12/31/1918, 1.

⁹⁷ This content includes: Ninette, "Les femmes et la vie de bureau", 5/15/1914, 1; Thomas Poulin, "Un rôle de compromis", 10/29/1919, 1; Henri Lessard, "L'enseignement ménager", 6/6/1925, 4; and Charles Gautier, "L'art ménager", 6/8/1932, 3.

⁹⁸ This point is made in the following editorials: Ninette, "Les femmes et la vie de bureau", 5/15/1914, 1; Ninette, "Les femmes et la vie de bureau", 5/27/1914, 1; Ninette, "Les femmes et la vie de bureau", 7/23/1914, 1; and Pierre du Pont, "Restons chez nous", 3/29/1916, 1.

⁹⁹ This material includes: Albert Carle, "Les sciences ménagères", 6/28/1916, 1; Henri Lessard, "Les cours du soir", 10/7/1925, 4; Henri Lessard, "Doublement efficace", 10/10/1928, 4; and Henri Lessard, "Les cours du soir", 5/9/1931, 4.

women should be educated as their educational pathway must ensure that they learned the foundational skills to become competent housewives:

Il est donc très important de choisir pour elles une maison d'éducation où l'on s'applique à développer, dans le cœur de la jeune fille, les qualités solides qui font les bonnes épouses et les bonnes mères de famille, aussi bien que les arts d'agrément qui permettent aux jeunes filles de briller dans les salons et la société.¹⁰⁰

It then stated that educational programs provided by the Sœurs Grises de la Croix to young women in Ottawa could be counted on to impart the necessary skills and aptitudes to run a household.¹⁰¹ Henri Lessard added to this narrative in 10 editorials that appeared between 1923 and 1931 touting the benefits of courses offered by the Bourse du Travail on behalf of the Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du Canada.¹⁰² The editorialist explained that having an institution teaching the art of homemaking was imperative as many young women, because they were forced into paid employment at an early age, oftentimes failed to receive the proper tutelage from their mothers. These women "...entrent dans la vie conjugale absolument sans préparation."¹⁰³ The training provided at the Bourse du travail—including tips on budgeting, cooking, sewing, and how to keep a tidy house—prepared them to master the skills needed as wives, mothers, and proper homemakers.¹⁰⁴ The newspaper similarly praised another institution for delivering a full suite of courses in matrimonial training. It mentioned that the École ménagère régionale de Montebello had rightfully added "...à son cours académique classico-ménager un cours spécial de science ménagère plus avancé" which produced "...des maîtresses

¹⁰⁰ J. Albert Foisy, "Une bonne et ancienne maison", 8/18/1917, 1.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. For more information on these institutions, see Nicole Thivierge, *Écoles ménagères et instituts familiaux : un modèle féminin traditionnel* (Québec : IQRC, 1982).

¹⁰² These pieces include: "Les bienfaits de ces cours", 6/8/1923, 4; "Pour les demoiselles", 9/15/1927, 4; and "Les cours du soir", 5/9/1931, 4.

¹⁰³ Henri Lessard, "Les cours du soir", 9/22/1923, 4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

de maison accomplies.”¹⁰⁵ Praising this teaching institution for offering specialized curriculum to mould young women to assume their responsibilities in the home demonstrates how *Le Droit*, nearly twenty years after it launched, still believed in the sanctity of separate spheres based upon traditional gender views.

The deteriorating economic conditions of the early 1930s incited the organ to renew its calls for excluding women from the paid labour force. It printed 15 editorials between 1930 and 1933 arguing that the disturbingly high unemployment rates could be significantly reduced if women returned to their appropriate place in the home.¹⁰⁶ Women who took up positions in the federal civil service were singled out in this content. *Le Droit* targeted this specific sector as it was one of the region’s most important provider of well-paying and stable jobs. It maintained, for instance, that a disturbing pattern had emerged in the past few years where multiple female family members from a single-family work in the same office.¹⁰⁷ It condemned the fact that some of these women must evidently be working for self-serving reasons and not because their family needed so many breadwinners. This editorial included part of a speech recently heard at a local gathering of the Conseil du travail du Canada about this issue:

Un grand nombre de jeunes filles et de femmes mariées sont employées sans qu’elles aient besoin de ce travail pour vivre. Elles privent ainsi les familles dans le besoin de travail nécessaire. Il faudrait mener une enquête sérieuse dans tous les cas de travail féminin. Ces femmes qui travaillent et qui privent les autres d’un emploi qui serait accepté avec plaisir n’emploient leurs revenus que pour vivre dans un plus grand luxe. Avant donc d’accorder un emploi à une jeune fille, l’employeur devrait s’assurer si elle a réellement besoin

¹⁰⁵ Charles Gautier, “L’art ménager”, 6/8/1932, 3.

¹⁰⁶ Some of these editorials include: Richard Léopold, “Le travail féminin”, 9/2/1930, 4; Henri Lessard, “Résolution motivé”, 12/1/1931, 4; Henri Lessard, “Le travail des femmes”, 1/28/1932, 4; and Henri Lessard, “Répartition du travail”, 12/14/1932, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Léopold Richer, “Le travail féminin”, 9/2/1930, 4.

de travailler.¹⁰⁸

Six editorials appeared over the next three years contending that the federal government should implement a regulation to ensure that vacant positions would only go to women who could prove they needed paid employment to support their kin.¹⁰⁹ It also argued that regulations should be enacted to lay off multiple female workers from the same family to free up positions for families without any breadwinners. In 1931 “Résolution motivée” noted how the Club conservateur de Hull had passed a worthy resolution at its last meeting asking that “...le gouvernement fédéral congédie les femmes mariées qu’il emploie, pour les remplacer par d’autres femmes, qui ont réellement besoin de gagner.”¹¹⁰ The next step, it argued, should be to free up these types of positions for unemployed male heads of families. Once instituted “...on pourrait ensuite demander à l’industrie, au commerce, aux divers bureaux d’affaires de suivre l’exemple qui leur viendrait de haut, c’est-à-dire de circonscrire raisonnablement leur personnel féminin.”¹¹¹ Doing so would arrest the trend that had women interfering where they did not belong.

As economic conditions worsened in the next two years, *Le Droit* stepped up its campaign to displace women from salaried occupations. It even asked the government to intervene in the matter by launching a full-fledged investigation to determine where females were taking up paid jobs unnecessarily. An editorial mentioned that the State must step in to rectify this situation because it was an economic and moral detriment to society:

Il faudrait qu’une enquête générale au pays, dans les services publics et dans les entreprises privées, soit conduite pour déterminer le nombre de femmes qui y sont employées sans

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ These opinion pieces include: Henri Lessard, “Le travail féminin”, 9/12/1931, 4; Henri Lessard, “Le travail féminin”, 2/15/1932, 4; and Henri Lessard, “Le travail féminin”, 2/4/1933, 4.

¹¹⁰ Henri Lessard, “Résolution motivée”, 12/1/1931, 4.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

raison valable, en vue de leur substituer d'hommes. On serait tout probablement fort surpris du nombre de femmes ainsi salariées. Par conséquent, le chômage recevrait déjà un bon soulagement du fait de leur remplacement par des hommes. Cette substitution serait un grand bienfait à tous points de vue : économique, social, moral. L'on ne verrait plus ce spectacle irritant de filles prenant la place de leur père et de leurs frères.¹¹²

This viewpoint framed the arguments *Le Droit* presented about gender-based solutions to alleviate the Great Depression's soaring unemployment rates. Targeting women's participation in the paid labour force during these very difficult economic times gave the Oblate-led organ an opportune chance to renew its campaign in favour of a gendered approach to separate spheres of influence.

As mentioned previously, the issue of female suffrage elicited much commentary from *Le Droit*. The content it published from 1913 to 1933 about the topic fit into its broader campaign against feminism. Over a dozen editorials accused feminism of eroding the natural doctrine of separate spheres linked to traditional gender roles.¹¹³ It was argued, for instance, that for centuries women dutifully filled their role "...d'être la compagne de l'homme, de compléter sa personnalité, régner au foyer, de former le cœur et l'intelligence des enfants, en un mot d'être épouse et mère." but that "(m)alheureusement, le progrès moderne est arrivé avec ses idées de bouleversement, avec ses principes de revendications, avec ses droits de la femme, avec la rage de l'égalité pour toutes les classes, tous les âges, tous les sexes."¹¹⁴ Feminism's increasing popularity was unfortunately creating a society where women competed with men instead of

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ These twelve editorials include: J. Albert Foisy, "La doctrine nouvelle", 3/1/1917, 1; Charles Gautier, "Démocratie et féminisme", 2/4/1920, 3; Charles Michaud, "Un éteignoir d'étoiles", 7/21/25, 3; and Charles Gautier, "Une erreur moderne", 4/11/1928, 3.

¹¹⁴ J. Albert Foisy, "Question d'égalité", 7/29/1918, 1.

complementing them. J. Edmond Cloutier noted a few years later that the push to allow women to participate in the political sphere was a dreadful offshoot of a misguided campaign for sexual equality. Suffragism, in his mind, was not in the best interest of women as it contradicted their pre-destined place in society. His support of this traditional viewpoint was clear in the statement:

Il y a loin de là cependant à admettre que les femmes doivent envahir le domaine politique ou des fonctions pour lesquelles elles ne sont pas faites. La femme n'y gagnera jamais à sacrifier son rôle pour rechercher la royauté du bras ou se lancer dans no hasardeux conquêtes d'intelligence. Celle que l'on a qualifiée de suffragette est une autre déclassée, une caricature hybride, qui cessant d'être une femme ne saurait devenir un homme. Chacun a son rôle et chacun sa place ; la nature le veut ainsi. Viser plus haut, c'est ridicule ! La place de la femme est d'abord au foyer ; elle en est la reine ; à elle, l'empire de la vie privée sans exclure cependant l'influence indirecte qu'elle peut sagement exercer sur l'empire de l'extérieur.¹¹⁵

Cloutier's argument clearly rested on the notion that suffrage rights for women contradicted a social order where females and males had dominion over their respective sphere of interest. *Le Droit* printed a significant number of editorials denouncing calls to allow women to vote on the grounds that it would erode the notion of separate spheres it held dear. Twenty-seven opinion pieces appeared between 1913 and 1925 as federal authorities as well as provincial officials in Ontario moved to extend franchise rights to women.¹¹⁶ The most telling was a four-part series from early 1921 authored by the Oblate cleric and future cardinal, J. M. Rodrigue Villeneuve. The priest explained that public officials had made a grave mistake in recently acquiescing to suffragist demands. According to him, the resultant changes challenged the natural predilection of women "...faite avant tout pour la maternité. Or, en thèse générale, la maternité et les devoirs

¹¹⁵ J. Edmond Cloutier, "Choses féminines: la Fédération Nationale en Congrès", 4/16/1921, 3.

¹¹⁶ These editorials include: Unsigned, "Faux principe du suffragisme", 4/19/1913, 1; J. Albert Foisy, "Qui avait raisons ?", 7/22/1918, 1; Thomas Poulin, "Très bien", 5/2/1921, 3; and Charles Gautier, "Le suffrage féminin", 2/4/1922, 3.

qui en découlent s'opposent à ce que la femme participe à la vie publique : en plus ou en moins, mais dans une certaine mesure, c'est sans conteste."¹¹⁷ Villeneuve then mentioned that giving women the right to vote exposed them to being "...moins mère, moins femme."¹¹⁸ The experiment with allowing women to vote, he stated in the third installment, would hopefully lead people to recognize that females were ill-suited to join men in the public sphere.¹¹⁹ The cleric closed the series by stating that God would be pleased if women did not have the burden of participating in public life. They should instead be allowed to dedicate themselves to being perfect wives, good mothers, and effective overseers of household matters.¹²⁰

It is noteworthy to point out that *Le Droit* used a very pragmatic approach to the issue of female voting rights when it came to allowing Ontario women to cast ballots in provincial or federal elections. The newspaper published editorials explaining that, although it opposed women's suffrage in principle, females from Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority should exercise their voting rights if and when the opportunity arose. Four pieces appeared during election campaigns calling upon these women to vote since English-speaking women would certainly be doing so.¹²¹ If they objected to doing so on ideological grounds, they would simply be giving more political power to the majority group already in a position to undermine their language and religious rights. J. Albert Foisy presented this position by answering those who asked before the October, 1919 Ontario election "Should French Canadian women register to vote?". He responded by stating "(à) cette question, la réponse que nous suggère la sagesse et

¹¹⁷ J. M. Rodrigue Villeneuve, "Autour du suffrage des femmes", 1/11/1922, 3.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 1/12/1922, 3.

¹²⁰ 1/14/1922, 3.

¹²¹ These four editorials are: "Le vote des femmes". 8/4/1919, 1; "Il faut s'inscrire". 11/3/1921, 4; "Le vote des femmes". 11/30/1921, 3; and "Le vote des femmes". 10/21/1925, 4.

la nécessité, est affirmative. Oui, certainement, toutes les femmes canadiennes-françaises ont le *devoir* (his italics) de se faire inscrire sur les listes d'électrices. Elles doivent le faire immédiatement et s'assurer que leur nom n'a pas été oublié."¹²² Foisy then mentioned how this was an unfortunate reality:

Il est malheureux que nous soyons obligés de recourir à de telles nécessités, mais nous vivons dans un temps de lutte et la plus grande erreur, celle qui causerait infailliblement notre perte, ce serait d'être pris par l'orage sans aucune préparation ; ce serait de laisser nos adversaires profiter de tous les avantages et de toutes les forces que leur donnent les lois nouvelles pendant que nous nous abstenons volontairement de profiter des mêmes avantages et de faire agir les mêmes forces.¹²³

The same argument was put forth on another occasion before the 1921 federal election.¹²⁴ In the minds of those at *Le Droit*, the reality meant that women needed to participate in the political process as the Franco-Ontarian community could ill afford, as a demographic minority whose rights were in jeopardy, to have them abstain for ideological reasons. The need to use the political process to protect their minority rights superseded adhering to traditional values where women eschewed the political sphere. *Le Droit's* very pragmatic choice of telling its female readers to vote showed that it was willing to make strategic compromises to ensure the survival of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority.

General Topic Family—Subheading Divorce

The second most talked about theme in the General Topic Family focused on the destructive impacts that the dissolution of marriages had on family members and even the greater community. More specifically, *Le Droit* published 44 editorials pointing out how divorce was

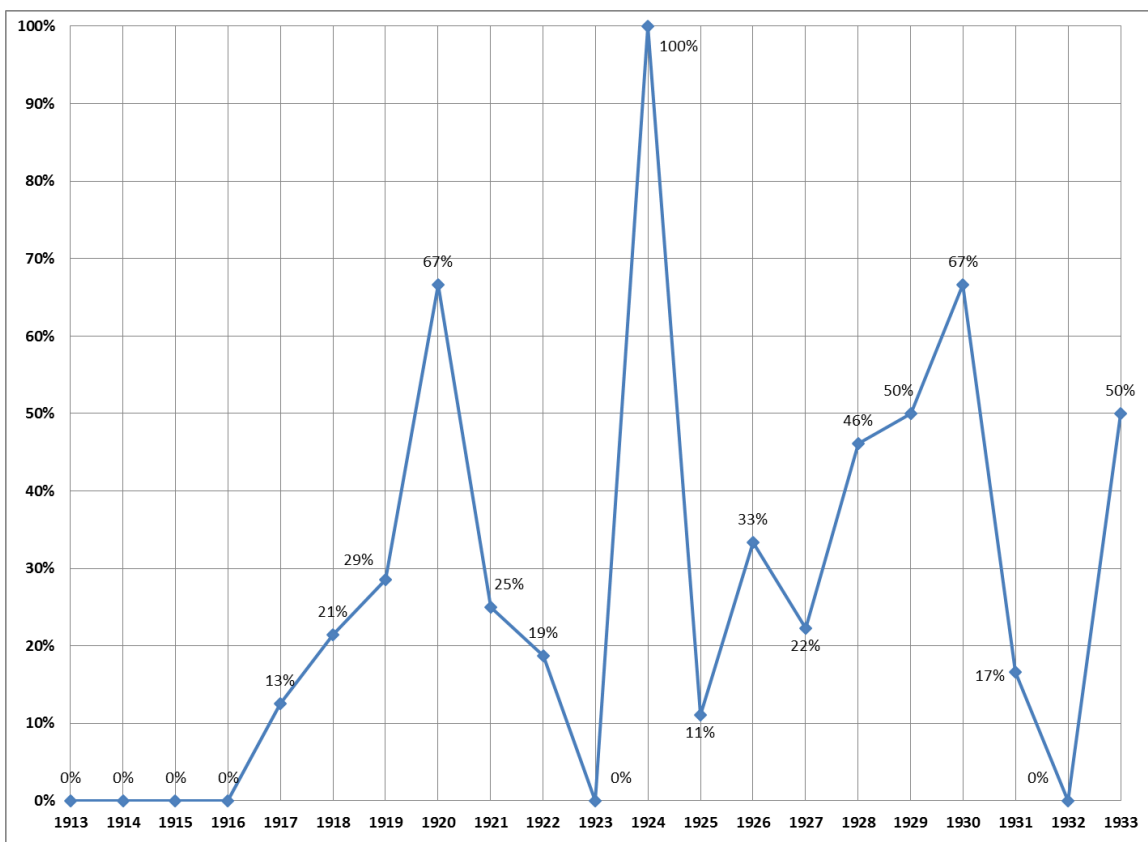
¹²² 8/4/1919, 1.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Thomas Poulin, "Il faut s'inscrire", 11/3/1921, 4

extremely damaging to young children and had a destabilizing influence on society.¹²⁵ Over the period in question readers witnessed about two or three pieces per year on this matter. (See Appendix G: General Topic Family and its Subheadings per year) As shown in Figure 21, the Subheading Divorce, aside from a few notable instances, had a relatively weak share of the content in the General Topic Family.

Figure 21: Editorial content in the General Topic Family from the Subheading Divorce



Spikes in the share of this material occurred when the House of Commons debated the issue of implementing special courts to process divorce requests.¹²⁶ The daily printed 30 editorials during

¹²⁵ Charles Gautier contributed the most editorial content (20), followed by Charles Michaud (8), and J. Albert Foisy (7).

¹²⁶ From 1840 to 1968, the Parliament of Canada had jurisdiction over granting divorces. The process involved placing a notice of intent to petition the government for an Act of Divorce in the Canada Gazette and in two

this period voicing its outright opposition to the idea.¹²⁷ Much of this content argued that setting up these types of courts was inappropriate as the State did not have exclusive jurisdiction over what it considered a “sacred” union blessed by God. Civic representatives, these editorials posited, did not have the final authority to undo the clerical order which sanctified the bonds of marriage. An early 1920 editorial explained that the Catholic Church virulently contested any policy undermining its jurisdiction in this matter. It argued that “(l)’Église s’oppose au divorce parce qu’il est contraire à la loi divine, à la loi naturelle, au bien de la société civile, de la famille, des individus et, surtout, des enfants.”¹²⁸ A later piece made the case that, because the bond of wedlock was a Sacrament, it was implicit that only the Church has the final word on the dissolving marriages.¹²⁹ This argument spoke to the impracticality of disbanding marriages in a society where the clergy was intimately involved in wedlock customs. *Le Droit* spent much effort combating the movement to liberalize divorce because it believed that a marriage, since the Church was involved in uniting both parties, was not just a typical agreement subject to annulment by civil authorities.

Aside from making the case that jurisdictional precedent was an obstacle to terminating marriages, *Le Droit* printed several editorials asserting that divorce had far-reaching negative social consequences. Eighteen pieces argued that allowing marriages to be dissolved undermined

newspapers in the district or county where the petitioner resided. It was to appear for a 6-month period. The Senate would then investigate the petition and, if it decided to accept it, Parliament would then pass an Act of Divorce terminating the marriage. Constitution Act, 1867, Section 91(26) Legislation had been enacted in some provinces setting up Divorce Courts which circumvented this process. Divorce Courts were finally instituted in Ontario May, 1930 as a result of the passing the previous year of the Act to Provide in the Province of Ontario for the Dissolution and Annulment of Marriage. For more on the evolution of divorce laws in Canada, see Kristen Douglas, *Divorce Law in Canada* (Law and Government Division, Revised 27, March 2001).

¹²⁷ Some of these include: J. Albert Foisy, “La doctrine de l’Église”, 6/26/1919, 3; Fulgence Charpentier, “Le divorce au Parlement”, 3/24/1924, 3; Charles Gautier, “Pour faciliter le divorce”, 3/31/1927, 3; and Charles Gautier, “Une loi désastreuse”, 5/20/1930, 3.

¹²⁸ J. Albert Foisy, “Un livre nouveau”. 4/21/20, 3.

¹²⁹ J. Edmond Cloutier, “L’église et le mariage”, 7/30/1920, 3.

the foundation of society.¹³⁰ “Une plaie sociale”, for instance, noted that “(l)e divorce est la plus grande plaie sociale des temps modernes puisqu’il est la violation d’une des lois les plus strictes de Dieu et qu’il amène infailliblement la décadence d’un peuple en faisant disparaître le sentiment et la sainteté de la famille.”¹³¹ Three years later the organ asserted that the spread of divorce in the United States had caused significant social ills. The editorial in question included a quote from a prison priest from Massachusetts who said:

Le divorce détruit les foyers, désorganise les familles, tue la notion de l’autorité et de la discipline parmi les enfants et les jeunes gens ; il est donc une des plus fécondes causes de crimes. Le divorce n’est pas la seule cause des crimes, mais il en est une des plus grandes ; il ne devrait rencontrer aucune pitié aux yeux de la loi. Le temps est venu de se rendre compte que le divorce est un des plus importants problèmes que nous devons résoudre, il est temps de créer une saine opinion publique qui demandera le rappel des lois relâchées du divorce, qui donne en réalité une prime au pécher en accordant une séparation légale, alors qu’elles devraient défendre à l’un ou l’autre parti de se remarier.¹³²

Another editorial from the end of the 1920s similarly argued that allowing marital unions to be dissolved had negative consequences for all.¹³³ A society without stable family units would ultimately be torn apart by individualism and selfishness. In short, “...le divorce, législation tout à fait antifamiliale, et par conséquent antisociale...”.¹³⁴ *Le Droit* was convinced that divorce, because it undermined the cornerstone of society, weakened any civilisation.

¹³⁰ These editorials include: J. Albert Foisy, “La plaie du divorce”, 3/14/1917, 1; J. Edmond Cloutier, “Un scandaleux mouvement”, 6/22/1920, 3; Charles Michaud, “Divorces au Canada”, 10/31/1927, 3; and Charles Gautier, “Le fléau du divorce”, 2/18/1930, 3.

¹³¹ J. Albert Foisy, “Une plaie sociale”, 7/3/1918, 1.

¹³² Charles Gautier, “Les protestants et le divorce”, 6/22/1921, 3.

¹³³ Henri Lessard, “Société et famille”, 12/6/1929, 4.

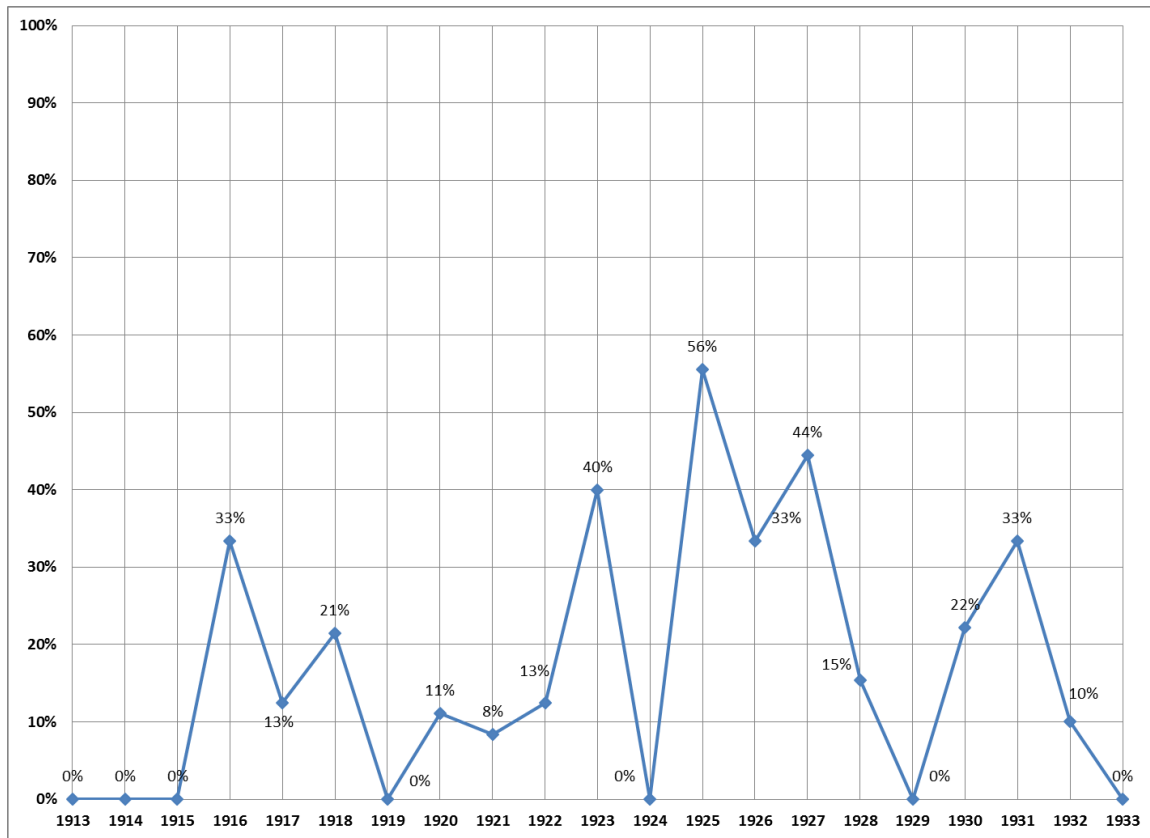
¹³⁴ Ibid.

General Topic Family—Subheading Reproduction

Content in the previous two subheadings was meant to warn readers against the adopting practices that were becoming increasingly common. *Le Droit* contended that challenging conventional gender norms and efforts to make the dissolution of marital unions easier would undermine stable societies. Having large families was likewise mentioned as contributing to prosperous communities. Twenty-five editorials about optimum fertility rates were included in the Subheading Reproduction which ranked first only twice and last nine times from 1913 to 1933.¹³⁵ (Appendix G: General Topic Family and its Subheadings per year) Figure 22 shows that the appearance of this content was certainly unpredictable and most often represented less than one-third of the content in the General Topic Family.

¹³⁵ Henri Lessard contributed the most content (8) followed by Charles Gautier (5).

**Table 22: Editorial content in the General Topic Family
from the Subheading Reproduction**



In brief, this content was divided into two very distinct periods. First, ten editorials published from 1916 to 1923 focused on the factors *Le Droit* believed caused fertility rates to drop worldwide.¹³⁶ For instance, a mid-1917 editorial noted that France’s birth rate had dipped substantially from 26.1 births per 1 000 people in 1874-1876 to 18.2 births per 1 000 people in 1917-1918.¹³⁷ This decline, it was argued, was largely due to the fact that people had abandoned their spirituality and, as a consequence, were increasingly selfish.¹³⁸ “Remède et remède” printed a few weeks after the end of the First World War argued that, due to wartime losses, selfish

¹³⁶ These editorials include: J. Albert Foisy, “Une doctrine païenne”, 9/21/1916, 1; Thomas Poulin, “L’étendue du mal”, 7/19/1918, 1; and Henri Lessard, “Le Bureau de la santé”, 7/8/1922, 4.

¹³⁷ Thomas Poulin, “La Famille Française”, 9/12/1917, 1.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

attitudes needed to be adjusted to stop the declining birth rate harming many countries. It stated that the countries experiencing the biggest declines in birth rate over the past few decades “(s)ans contredit, ce sont les peuples qui ont le plus progressé matériellement, ceux qui sont les plus fortunés, ceux qui se disent et qu’on dit les plus civilisés.”¹³⁹ According to the piece, immorality was the root cause of this dangerous trend. Specifically, people had become more and more egotistical as a result of the transition to an industrialised urban society.¹⁴⁰ The organ brought the topic closer to home in a later piece which warned that French Canada should be on guard since it too could easily fall prey to the spread of Malthusian socialism which depressed reproductive rates.¹⁴¹

The remainder of the editorials promoted strategies to block the decline of reproductive rates.¹⁴² The most popular approaches rested on measures to ensure that people could afford to have large families. For instance, “Le problème de la famille nombreuse” explained how several nations had recently launched programs that disbursed funds to parents based on the size of their family. This type of strategy, it was mentioned, should be considered in Canada as fewer and fewer people could afford to support a large family.¹⁴³ This approach garnered praise in 1931 as economic circumstances were worsening. *Le Droit* stated that the Quebec government’s decision to explore the possibility of instituting “baby bonuses” to ensure that financial pressures would never preclude anyone from having a large family.¹⁴⁴ This measure would serve to “...rétablir l’équilibre économique et social aujourd’hui plus brisé que jamais, entre la situation faite à la

¹³⁹ J. Albert Foisy, “Remède et remède”, 11/30/1918, 1.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Harry Bernard, “L’influence française à la baisse”, 7/24/1922, 3.

¹⁴² These 13 editorials include: Henri Lessard, “Le problème de la famille nombreuse”, 6/4/1927, 4; Henri Lessard, “L’aide à la famille”, 2/23/1928, 4; and Henri Lessard, “Législation familiale”. 2/9/1932, 4.

¹⁴³ 6/4/1927, 4.

¹⁴⁴ Henri Lessard, “Ces allocations”, 4/8/1931, 4.

famille nombreuse et celle qui est le lot des foyers avec peu d'enfants ou des époux qui n'en ont pas du tout.”¹⁴⁵ Providing support to parents who had many children through “l'allocation familiale” eroded the economic case for limiting family sizes. *Le Droit* was confident that this type of measure, although it was not intended to incentivize having more children, would ensure that parents who chose to do so would not be penalized.

Conclusion

This chapter explored themes integral to the belief systems of a society. These included, how a population was educated and the roles that its members had to play in highly functioning and prosperous communities. Given the fact that the Oblates had a longstanding history of supporting educational initiatives and institutions, it was foreseeable that material in the General Topic Education would stress the importance of schooling and professional development through learning. Editorials from the General Topic Family favouring separate spheres of activities according to conventional gender norms were likewise not unanticipated from a newspaper under the control of a Catholic order. Neither was the inclusion of pieces which opposed the State's right to dissolve marriages sanctified by the Church as well as those who extolled the destabilizing impact of divorce. The General Topic Education and Family also contained material expected from a battle organ with a mandate to protect the minority rights of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority. These included editorials that made the case for obtaining a good education as a means of producing leaders to lead the charge against assimilationist threats. However, some material showed how those at *Le Droit* oftentimes made practical decisions the positions they promoted on the editorial pages. The organ's business imperatives and the reality of the situation the French-speaking Catholic minority faced in Ontario compelled the editorial

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

board to adopt pragmatic approaches. For instance, the need to attract a broader readership to remain commercially viable underlined the strategy *Le Droit* employed in regards to the thorny issue of compulsory schooling. In brief, it only printed content opposing mandatory schooling in the editorial section on page four that would most likely be read by readers from Quebec. This strategy allowed *Le Droit* to promote a view which appealed to the audience in that province while mitigating the potential of being portrayed as supporting a position roundly opposed in Ontario. It relied on this deliberate approach to attract readers in Quebec while hopefully not costing itself sales in Ontario. *Le Droit*'s pragmatism was probably most evident in the pieces that asked Franco-Ontarian women to vote when called upon. Although supporting women's suffrage was anathema to Catholic ideals at the time, the daily recognised that objecting to having Franco-Ontarian women vote would only further marginalise the minority group. Chapter Four will likewise show that the daily's editorial content served to promote the dual mandate of its founders and controllers while extolling some very surprising strategies reflective of their innate pragmatism.

CHAPTER FIVE

Le Droit's perspective on making a living

This chapter explores editorials in the General Topic Economy & Business. It serves to uncover *Le Droit's* perspective on work-related lifestyle choices at a time when Canada completed its transition to a predominately urban industrialized nation. The content shows that, when it first appeared, the organ enthusiastically supported living in the countryside and farming pursuits. Opinion pieces encouraging colonization programs or inspiring people to dedicate themselves to agriculture were common. Some of this content argued that the French-speaking Catholic minority should embrace farming and living in the countryside to protect against assimilation. *L'Action catholique*, according to historian Richard Jones, promoted very similar arguments that linked rural living with safeguarding French-Catholics in Quebec¹. It continuously made the case that education should be geared to encourage young people to stay on the land, dedicate themselves to a traditional rural existence.² The organ also asked the government to implement initiatives to support agriculturalists and programs to help those who had left the countryside to return.³ It is important to note that the frequency of this type of material in *Le Droit* decreased significantly beginning in the early 1920s. Editorials encouraging participating in the wage economy and backing commercial ventures in urban centers became increasingly prevalent. Much of this content implored French-Canadians to use these means to become economically independent. Doing so, *Le Droit* asserted, would give them leverage to protect their language and religious rights. Opinion pieces touting the benefits of the cooperative movement were also a staple of these two decades. For *Le Droit*, cooperatives provided Franco-

¹ Richard Jones, *L'Idéologie de l'Action catholiques* (Québec : Les Presses de L'Université Laval, 1974), 194-195.

² Ibid., 251.

³ Ibid., 249.

Ontarians a chance to increase their wealth and invest in their communities. Both of these outcomes, the daily insisted, better positioned the minority to challenge efforts to acculturate them.

General Topic Economy & Business—Subheading Agriculture/Ruralism

Chapter One briefly mentioned how the General Topic Economy & Business represented, on average, close to ten percent of *Le Droit's* editorial content from 1913 to 1933. Looking closely at the distribution of this material shows slight ebbs and flows as well as a few notable spikes.⁴ Although this General Topic ranked in the top half from 1913 to 1918, its importance decreased over the next decade—typically appearing in seventh or eighth place—until it climbed back into the top five in 1931. The Great Depression caused this resurgence. (See Appendix C: General Topics per Year by Percentage and Appendix D: General Topics per Year by Rank) The 673 editorials in the General Topic Economy & Business are catalogued into four Subheadings: Agriculture/Ruralism (327), Commercial Participation (259), Cooperatives (66), and Resource Industries (21).⁵ The Subheading Agriculture/Ruralism accounted for nearly half of the General Topic. It includes content promoting farming as an occupation and living in the countryside. This Subheading ranked first eleven times and second ten other times.⁶ (See Appendix H: General Topic Economy & Business and its Subheadings per Year) As shown in Figure 23, the comparative importance of this theme in the General Topic Economy & Business can essentially

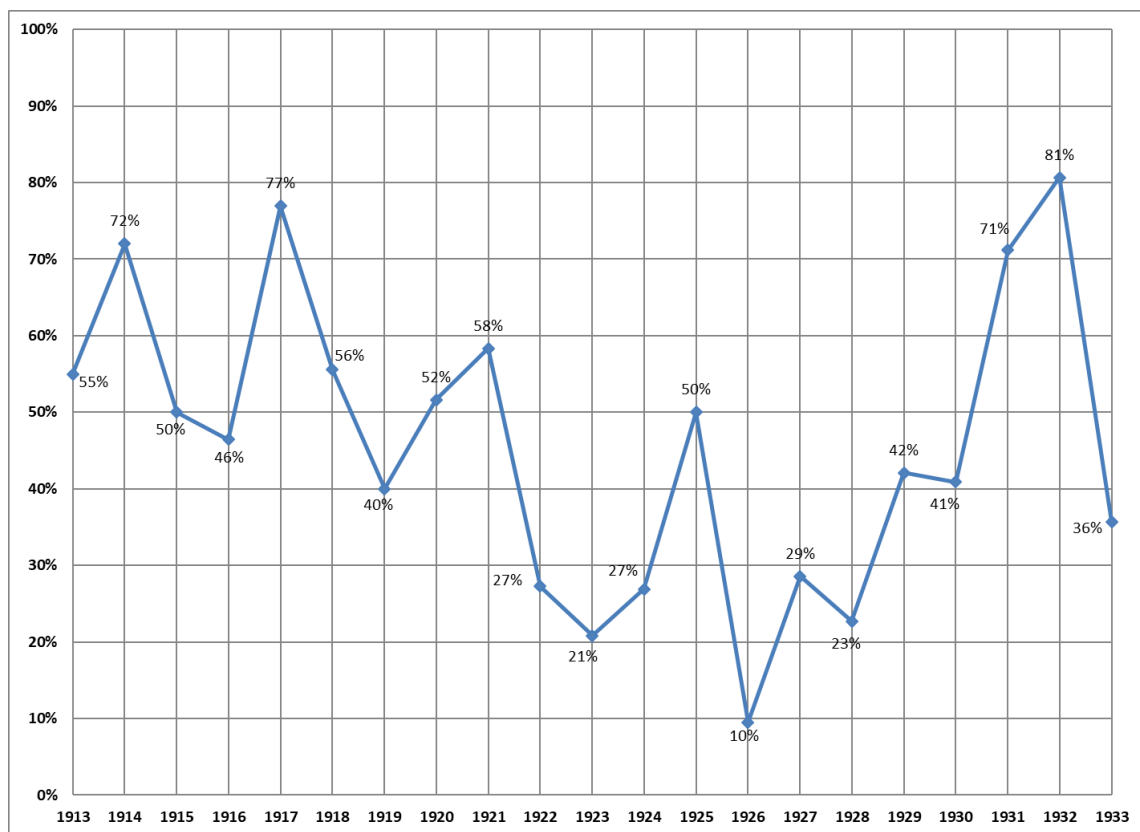
⁴ The First World War, the poor economic conditions following the end of military hostilities, and the organ's brief focus on a project to launch a matchmaking industry in Hull respectively caused sudden increases in content in 1914, 1920, 1922, and 1928.

⁵ For brevity sake, Subheadings with fewer than 50 editorials are solely mentioned in the quantitative section of this chapter.

⁶ The Subheading Agriculture/Ruralism held the first place in all but one year from 1913 to 1921. From that point onward the Subheading Commercial Participation took a toehold on the General Topic Economy & Business ranking first nine out of 12 years. Thirty-three editorialists contributed opinion pieces on the subject. While J. Albert Foisy's 20 editorials led all between 1913 and 1920, Charles Gautier and Henri Lessard were by far the most productive afterwards. Whereas the former authored 92 opinion pieces, the latter signed his name to 72 editorials.

be separated into three phases: Notwithstanding 1919, the Subheading Agriculture/Ruralism hovered near or above the fifty percent mark to 1921. Then it represented less than one-third of the content for five of the next six years. It regained its original comparative importance starting in 1929, peaking at slightly over 80 percent in 1932. As will be shown, this rebound was due to the fact that *Le Droit* printed numerous editorials in the early years of the Great Depression encouraging a “return to the land” to solve the economic downturn.

Figure 23: Editorial content in the General Topic Economy & Business from the Subheading Agriculture/Ruralism



When *Le Droit* first appeared it consistently encouraged people to live in rural settings. Just over half of the 327 pieces mentioned the need for colonization schemes to populate remote regions in

Ontario and Quebec.⁷ It is worth mentioning that many people at the end of the nineteenth-century advocated settling remote regions as they feared that industrialisation was shifting too much of the nation's population to urban centers. Proponents of rural settlement programs argued that rebalancing the proportion of inhabitants between rural and urban regions would ensure the country developed healthily. Government officials in Quebec and Ontario backed the colonization movement to varying degrees. Settlement solutions seemed especially important in the former as a dearth of industrial opportunities had pushed approximately 900,000 people to leave Quebec between 1840 and 1930.⁸ *Le Droit* was equally concerned with the issue of rural depopulation as abrupt changes to the Ottawa Valley's economy had drained its rural population and swelled its urban ranks. The loss in the second half of the nineteenth-century of local markets for agricultural products sparked the rural exodus. In short, the timber industry's sudden contraction greatly reduced local demand for agricultural goods and, consequently, eroded the need for a large agricultural labour force.⁹ Meanwhile, the ascendance of the pulp and paper industry in the region at the beginning of the twentieth-century only served to make paid labour in urban centers more attractive.¹⁰ *Le Droit* was especially concerned with the region's rapid

⁷ *Le Droit* printed 185 editorials supporting these kinds of settlement efforts. Twenty authors contributed to this content. Henri Lessard led the way (61) followed by Charles Gautier (33) and Fulgence Charpentier (10).

⁸ Linteau et. al, *Quebec: A History, 1867-1929*, 28. Concerns over out-migration led the Quebec government to institute a Department of Colonization in 1912. David J. Wood, *Places of Last Resort: The Expansion of the Farm Frontier into the Boreal Forest in Canada, c. 1910-1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006.), 78. The Ontario government took a different approach to colonizing its remote regions. Instead of offering lucrative incentives as Quebec did to entice people to farm in out-of-the-way places, it focused on building infrastructure to encourage northern resource extraction industries to fuel rural settlement. *Ibid.*, 84

⁹ Drummond, *Progress without Planning*, 29. Although the growing demand for cheese and butter for export markets allowed some to turn to dairy farming to survive, the overall proportion of those in the region who could live off of agricultural production diminished significantly. Hamelin and Gagnon, *Histoire du catholicisme québécois*, Tome I, 19.

¹⁰ The advent in the mid-nineteenth-century of several large lumber processing mills including those owned by J.R. Booth, E.B. Eddy, and James Maclaren provided the region with a sound industrial foundation. Gaffield, *Histoire de l'Outaouais*, 287. The pulp and paper industry flourished after 1880 when wood pulp replaced rags as paper's basic raw material. Drummond, *Progress without Planning*, 80. Lumber processing mills were retrofitted to pulp and paper processing while other industry leaders including Canadian International Paper set up operations in the region. *Ibid.*, 278. Industrial employment in Ottawa increased by 197% between 1870 and 1910. Drummond, *Progress*

conversion to an industrial economy as cities were seen by some as having a demoralizing influence on people.¹¹ The fact that from 1913 to 1933 *Le Droit* was controlled by Ottawa's Oblates significantly prejudiced the organ in favour of rural colonization efforts. In brief, many in the Catholic Church were convinced that the depopulation of rural regions might secularise society which would undermine the Church's influence over ideological, social, and political matters.¹² The Catholic Church resultantly put its weight behind any measures popularizing the rustic ideal to contain the growth of the urban population.¹³ The clergymen at the helm of *Le Droit* used its editorial pages to promote this viewpoint.

Almost a quarter of the 185 editorials promoting colonizing projects were published within the first two years of *Le Droit* appearing on newsstands. The flow of this type of content declined steadily to the end of the 1920s. The cluster of 43 pieces from 1913 to 1915 might have been a high-water mark for this type of content had it not been for the fact that the Great Depression caused *Le Droit* to renew its call for settlement efforts.¹⁴ Although the majority of editorials promoting colonization appeared in two groupings more than a decade apart, both used similar arguments.¹⁵ Underscoring the need for a comprehensive colonization strategy was *Le Droit*'s most popular approach. 158 out of 185 editorials used this tact. The greater majority of content mentioned specific programs as well as who—governments or non-governmental

without Planning, 167. The Ottawa Valley eventually became Canada's most important wood processing center. Gaétan Vallières, *L'Ontario français par les documents* (Montréal : Éditions Études Vivantes, 1980), 102.

¹¹ The explorations provided in Chapter Two and Three offer insight into this issue.

¹² Linteau et. al, *Quebec: A History, 1867-1929*, 104.

¹³ Wood, *Places of Last Resort*, 79.

¹⁴ The economic downturn hit the Ottawa Valley particularly hard as the slowdown decimated the pulp and paper industry. The national value of pulp and paper production fell from \$129 million in 1929 to \$56 million in 1933 causing the industry's workforce to contract from 15,890 to 9,850 workers. Linteau et. al *Quebec since 1930*, 10. Nearly one-hundred editorials appeared from 1931 to 1933 arguing that colonizing remote locations or recently abandoned farmlands would resolve the problem of urban unemployment.

¹⁵ Arguments appearing in fewer than 40 editorials by Subheading are only mentioned in the quantitative analysis of the chapter.

agencies—should implement them.¹⁶ The federal government was the primary focus of content asking governments to take a leading role in supporting rural settlement.¹⁷ The first piece appeared shortly after the newspaper went on sale. Prime Minister Robert Borden's Conservative government was asked in this editorial to institute a colonization program with generous incentives to entice people to move to rural regions. The settlement initiative, *Le Droit* explained, must also provide long-term support for those who re-settled.¹⁸ The organ printed five editorials in late 1918 similarly asking Ottawa to include a comprehensive colonization program in its post-First World War economic policy. "Pour l'après-guerre" asserted that the government was morally responsible to provide valuable jobs to decommissioned armed forces personnel as well as anyone who put their lives on hold to support the war effort at home. Directing these people to the agricultural labour force would give them the quality occupations they deserved and abate the troubling swelling of urban centers.¹⁹ The two concepts were neatly intertwined in the closing statement:

Une chose qu'il ne faut pas oublier, c'est que le Canada est surtout un pays agricole et que les efforts d'un gouvernement sage doivent converger vers l'établissement des soldats sur les terres. Avant la guerre il y avait déjà trop de monde dans les villes pour les besoins de l'industrie et, après la guerre, cette situation sera encore aggravée si le courant des soldats se dirige uniquement vers les grandes agglomérations.²⁰

¹⁶ Seventeen editorials focused on the role non-governmental organisations should take in settlement efforts. These pieces encouraged launching agencies to promote colonization efforts and asked readers to support existing organizations including "Les Missionnaires-Colonisateurs du Canada" and "L'association des colons du Nord Ontario". These editorials include: *Le Droit*, Deziel, "Les Mairaines paroissiales", 5/20/1913, 1; *Le Droit*, unsigned, "La colonisation pratique", 9/25/1915, 1; *Le Droit*, J. Albert Foisy, "Le région incendiée est une région d'avenir", 9/12/1916, 1; and *Le Droit*, Henri Lessard, "Placement agricole effectif", 6/20/1932, 4. All newspaper citations for the remainder of this chapter will refer to *Le Droit*.

¹⁷ These 75 editorials include: "Emparons-nous du sol". 11/5/1913, 1; "L'emprunt de la victoire". 10/11/1918, 1; "Industrie et agriculture". 7/23/1925, 3; and "Pour organiser les colons sur les terres nouvelles". 10/1/1931, 3.

¹⁸ Unsigned, "Emparons-nous du sol", 11/5/1913, 1.

¹⁹ J. Albert Foisy, "Pour l'après-guerre", 11/7/1918, 1.

²⁰ Ibid.

An editorial later in the month echoed the call for the federal government to include the settlement of rural regions as a key focus of its postwar economic planning. It was argued that, since nearly five years of warfare had decimated Europe's agricultural sector, Canada has a golden opportunity to become a global leader in foodstuff production.²¹ In fact, Ottawa needed to act quickly to take advantage of this circumstance "... (car) ce n'est pas la terre qui nous manqué, ce n'est pas non plus la fécondité du sol qui fait défaut, ce qu'il faut maintenant pour activer la production agricole et faire de notre pays un immense grenier où tous les produits de la terre pourront trouver en abondance, ce sont des mesures sages et généreuses en vue de ce développement."²² This piece was part of the organ's strategy linking colonization schemes to national economic imperatives. Promoting programs to settle people on rural and remote lands, the daily claimed from its inception, would provide stable jobs and ensure Canada's prosperity.

Le Droit continued to press the federal government to the end of the 1920s to institute colonization programs. Ottawa was criticized, for example, for not offering Eastern Canadians the same level of aid to relocate to the West that foreigners received.²³ This shortcoming, it was maintained, was forcing many of the former to go to urban centers to join the industrial workforce.²⁴ As mentioned earlier, the newspaper re-doubled its pro-colonization campaign when the economic downturn began in late 1929. The idea of using government-funded settlement schemes to "re-balance" the struggling Canadian economy appeared in 40 pieces.²⁵ Charles Gautier laid the groundwork for this argument by stating in a late 1930 editorial that the

²¹ Thomas Poulin, "Où chercher la richesse ?", 11/12/1918, 1.

²² Ibid.

²³ Charles Michaud, "Propos de colonisation", 10/8/1928, 3.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ These editorials include: Richard Léopold, "Qu'on retourne à la terre et ça ira mieux !", 8/21/1930, 3; Henri Lessard, "Retour à la terre", 10/4/1930, 4; Charles Gautier, "La désertion des campagnes", 10/21/1931, 3; Charles Gautier, "Le véritable remède", 5/20/1932, 3; and Charles Gautier, "Trois expériences", 9/29/1932, 3.

devastating economic conditions “...provient d’une mauvaise répartition de la population. Il y a trop de monde dans les villes, pas assez dans les campagnes.”²⁶ Circumstances could be improved, he argued, by slashing immigration and relocating Canadians to millions of acres of free farm land.²⁷ A similar point was made the following year in a piece which stated that a federal “back-to-the-land” program was the least expensive way for Ottawa to cope with the growing urban unemployment problem while also addressing the demographic imbalance that contributed to the economic crash. According to the newspaper:

C’est la terre qui souffre de désertion, qui manque de bras qu’elle invite, pendant que les villes regorgent d’un surplus d’habitants dont elles ne savent que faire, surtout actuellement. Il faudrait une intense campagne de retour à la terre pour y ramener les urbains qui n’ont dans les villes que le chômage pour partage, ou un emploi irrégulier, peu rémunérateur et jamais sûr pour le demain.²⁸

The daily met the 1932 announcement that federal and provincial officials had agreed to institute a rural settlement program with some derision.²⁹ Although pleased that a colonization initiative was finally in the works, it criticized federal authorities for acting so slowly. *Le Droit* stated that the severity of the economic downturn could have been mitigated and the costs incurred to support unemployed city-dwellers significantly reduced if officials had set in motion a settlement scheme the moment the economy soured.³⁰ According to the daily, “(s)i, au lieu d’attendre trois ans, le gouvernement fédéral avait, dès le début de la crise économique consacré à l’œuvre de la

²⁶ Charles Gautier, “Les mesures nécessaires”, 10/2/1930, 3.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Henri Lessard, “La bonne politique”, 9/10/1931, 4.

²⁹ This policy came about as federal authorities realized that cities were struggling to cope with the unemployed masses. The opportunity to place these people on unoccupied crop growing lands seemed to be a workable solution. The federal government, in collaboration with provincial authorities, enacted the Gordon Plan which provided a family subsidy to settle on tillable land. Wood, *Places of Last Resort*, 79.

³⁰ Charles Gautier, “Le retour à la terre”. 9/15/1932, 3.

colonisation les millions qu'il a dépensés en secours indirects, le problème du chômage aurait été vite simplifié.”³¹

Le Droit likewise routinely appealed to the Quebec and Ontario provincial governments to initiate their own settlement schemes. The former received by far the most attention as 55 of these pro-colonization editorials out of 60 targeted officials in Quebec City.³² As mentioned earlier, stemming the tide of provincial out-migration made colonizing efforts much more attractive for Quebec than Ontario. “Au Témiscamingue Québécois” printed in early 1914 was the first editorial asking provincial authorities to rely on colonization programs to stop Quebeckers from leaving the province. The piece noted that forcing the Canadian Pacific Railway to finish the delayed rail line connecting the region to the main trunk line was imperative to promote immigration to the under-populated district.³³ The Quebec government also needed to open new lots as wait times for access to good arable land in the region were too long. The editorial closed by mentioning that the region required its own Colonising Agent to boost settlement efforts.³⁴ Fulgence Charpentier penned a post-World War I editorial similarly asserting that the provincial government needed to better support those who had re-settled to the countryside. He specifically bemoaned the paltry help available to World War I veterans seeking to move to the northern part of the province. Charpentier reminded those in authority:

...qu'on ne crée pas un cultivateur avec des simples calculs sur le papier, comme Minerve sortait toute armée du cerveau de Jupiter, qu'il lui faut des secours moraux et physiques, que ce département (qui s'occupe de la colonisation) doit être

³¹ Ibid.

³² The editorials directed at the Quebec government include: Grosse Caisse, “Pour la colonisation”, 3/17/1914, 1; Albert Evelin, “Cultivateurs vs. citoyens”, 2/24/1915, 1; Fulgence Charpentier, “Les ressources naturelles du Québec”, 1/19/1925, 3; and Henri Lessard, “Un regret et une leçon”, 8/12/1931, 4.

³³ Unsigned, “Au Témiscamingue Québécois”, 2/17/1914, 1.

³⁴ Ibid.

scrupuleusement surveillé si les soldats, comme le pays, veulent en profiter, au lieu de laisser l'autorité entre les mains de mignons partisans des fortunes rapides et peu gênées sur les moyens de les acquérir.³⁵

The greater majority of post-1929 editorials asking provincial authorities to institute settlement programs similarly targeted the Quebec government.³⁶ Henri Lessard, the author of 26 of these 33 editorials, explained that politicians in Quebec City should realize that rural depopulation was partly to blame for the economic meltdown and, most importantly, settlement efforts should be prioritised over welfare programs for city-dwellers.³⁷ The newspaper prodded the Quebec government to accept the federal government's offer to collaborate with them in a settlement scheme to address high urban unemployment rates and kick-start the economy. "Québec se décidera-t-elle ?" ascertained that federal authorities had generously offered the provinces "200 \$ pour venir en aide à chaque famille de chômeur qui voudra se livrer à la culture dans les régions de colonisation, à condition que la province et la municipalité intéressés fournissent chacune une somme identique, afin de former un total de 600\$ par famille."³⁸ It appeared illogical that Premier Louis-Alexandre Taschereau balked at the offer simply because a few of the province's municipalities did not have the required matching funds. The piece asked bluntly: "(f)audrait-il que le mauvais état financier de plusieurs municipalités devint la pierre d'achoppement sur laquelle viendrait échouer un magnifique et vital projet ?"³⁹ *Le Droit* believed that the Quebec government should give loans to the few struggling municipalities to ensure the province participated in the federal-led program.⁴⁰ Premier Taschereau's eventual decision to sign on to

³⁵ Fulgence Charpentier, "Une colonie de forçats", 8/25/1922, 3.

³⁶ While 33 editorials mention how the Quebec government should instigate settlement initiatives, only 14 similar opinion pieces target the Ontario government.

³⁷ Henri Lessard, "Vers le sol", 9/23/1931, 4.

³⁸ Charles Gautier, "Québec se décidera-t-elle ?", 6/23/1932, 3.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Ottawa's rural settlement scheme was praised in an editorial published in early 1933.⁴¹

According to the piece:

Pourtant le mouvement de retour au sol, malgré son
peu d'ampleur, a donné des résultats. La plupart des
familles qui ont quitté la ville pour les endroits de coloni-
sation y sont intelligemment et courageusement restées.
Sur 454 partis de Montréal, il n'en est revenu que 11. Sur
la centaine qui ont laissé Hull c'est à peine si l'une ou
l'autre n'y est pas demeurée.⁴²

The claims were expected to show that well-run and adequately supported colonization initiatives were foolproof. *Le Droit* showcased the positive outcomes of existing settlement efforts to convince everyone that these relatively expensive programs were a worthwhile investment. In the minds of those at *Le Droit*, colonizing initiatives remained the least costly way to get people working while also pre-empting future economic downturns.

Le Droit's encouragement of rural settlement programs was not the only approach it used to promote country living. The newspaper likewise printed 119 editorials arguing that farming was much more rewarding than toiling at paid occupations in urban settings.⁴³ Two inter-related strategies were used in this material. While 66 editorials touched upon how those who left rural regions for urban centers regretted their decision⁴⁴, just over 50 pieces asked for new initiatives to ensure farming success.⁴⁵ Although *Le Droit* employed two relatively distinct tactics to entice

⁴¹ Henri Lessard, "Un remède efficace", 1/26/1933, 4.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Twenty-one editorialists contributed to this content. Charles Gautier was the most prolific. He authored 35 of these opinion pieces, followed by Henri Lessard (23), and J. Edmond Cloutier (8).

⁴⁴ Fourteen editorialists contributed to this material with Charles Gautier (21) authoring the most content followed by Henri Lessard (15). These pieces include: Guy D'Arvor, "Maladie contemporaine", 8/9/1913, 1; J. Albert Foisy, "Quelques causes", 2/23/1920, 3; Henri Lessard, "Industrie et agriculture", 8/6/1927, 4; Charles Gautier, "Deux suggestions", 1/22/1932, 3; and Henri Lessard, "La surpopulation des villes", 7/19/1933, 4.

⁴⁵ Fifteen editorialists provided content about this theme. Charles Gautier authored the most (14) followed by Henri Lessard (8). These editorials include: Unsigned, "Les initiatives du peuple", 2/23/1914, 1; Charles Gautier, "La mérite agricole", 7/12/1919, 3; Charles Michaud, "Notre industrie du blé", 9/29/1927, 3; Charles Gautier, "Pour le

people to farming and rural living, similar themes emerged in both cases. The need to provide broad-sweeping agricultural educational programming was mentioned in 51 of the combined 119 editorials.⁴⁶ The newspaper explained that a paucity agricultural learning opportunities undermined the success of the agricultural sector. Poor farming outcomes, it believed, not only led many to leave their farms but was also an obstacle to recruiting new stock. The organ argued that adding educational initiatives would make farmers more knowledgeable and, by consequence, more successful. “Les missionnaires agricoles”, for example, stated that “(c)e qui manque le plus aujourd’hui ce sont des cultivateurs instruits.”⁴⁷ The Quebec government was lauded for encouraging farmers to adopt up-to-date and promising agricultural practices. An early 1921 editorial noted how the upcoming “Semaine agricole” was a very effective way to “...enrayer le mouvement de dépopulation des campagnes par la diffusion de la science agricole...” and that the initiative “...mérite assurément l’attention de tous ceux que préoccupe notre problème rural.”⁴⁸

Le Droit reacted to the Great Depression by increasing its calls for enhancements to agricultural instruction. A case in point was Camille L’Heureux’s 1930 editorial calling on Queen’s Park to acquiesce to the request by the Union des cultivateurs franco-ontariens to launch an agricultural teaching academy in eastern Ontario. He specified that this type of specialised institution would provide the sound agricultural education farmers needed to be prosperous:

La nécessité de cette école devrait être une vérité évidente
pour tous. Chez les cultivateurs de langue française de l’est

salut de l’agriculture”, 6/25/1929, 3; and Richard Léopold, “Nous ne produisons pas suffisamment de beurre”, 9/19/1932, 3.

⁴⁶ Forty-eight of the 51 opinion pieces used this approach. These editorials include: Pierre du Pont, “Une excellente idée”, 6/12/1915, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “Il faut en profiter”, 3/22/1917, 1; Henri Lessard, “Les cultivateurs en congrès”, 11/14/1928, 4; and Charles Gautier, “Un entraînement nécessaire”, 2/5/1932, 3.

⁴⁷ Unsigned, “Les missionnaires agricoles”, 7/18/1914, 1.

⁴⁸ J. Edmond Cloutier, “Progrès agricole et éducation sociale”, 1/27/1921, 3.

de la province, elle saute aux yeux. Que n'a-t-on pas dit au cours des dernières années, sur la nécessité de l'instruction agricole ? Ces idées ont germé dans la classe agricole de la langue française de l'est de l'Ontario. Aujourd'hui, ces cultivateurs parce qu'ils sont convaincus de la nécessité d'armer leurs fils des connaissances théoriques et pratiques agricoles nécessaires à la conduite scientifique d'une ferme, demandent que le gouvernement les mettent à la portée de leurs fils.⁴⁹

The provincial government's agronomists, L'Heureux further mentioned, were unprepared to provide farmers the specialised knowledge they needed to prosper. Two editorials appeared in early 1932 likewise imploring Queen's Park to institute programs to ensure farming success. The first claimed that young growers did not have the time to undertake the intensive and lengthy agricultural education programs on offer. The École moyenne d'agriculture model from Quebec appeared to provide the perfect solution to meet the increasingly specialized educational needs of young farmers while respecting their time commitments.⁵⁰ By instituting these types of schools, the province could "...former des agriculteurs instruits, au courant des besoins agricoles de leur région, capable d'adapter les principes scientifiques aux circonstances locales."⁵¹ The organ made a very similar plea in "De nouveaux horizons". In this case, it called upon Quebec's "collèges classiques" to match the programming offered at the École moyenne d'agriculture. This position was inspired by arguments made by Abbé Georges Bilodeau in his essay "Le vrai remède". The cleric argued that several years of formal and intensive schooling were unnecessary to train good farmers.⁵² Quebec's three École moyenne d'agriculture, Bilodeau

⁴⁹ Camille L'Heureux, "Une école bilingue d'agriculture", 11/24/1930, 3.

⁵⁰ Charles Gautier, "Un enseignement moyen", 2/18/1932, 3. Quebec launched these institutions in the mid-1920s as a means of providing specialised agricultural training to high school youth who would become farmers. For more on this topic, see Thérèse Hamel et al. "Les agriculteurs à l'école : les savoirs enseignés dans les écoles moyennes et régionales au Québec, 1926-69" (*Revue Canadienne de l'Éducation* 24, 4. 1999), 398-410.

⁵¹ Charles Gautier, "Un enseignement moyen", 2/18/1932, 3.

⁵² Ibid., "De nouveaux horizons", 2/19/1932, 3.

explained, had developed a program which offered specialized instruction in a timely manner.⁵³

Scaling this model, the organ explained, was easily accomplishable if this segment of the province's higher learning institutions added this curriculum to their existing educational offerings. It mentioned, "(l)es collèges classiques, qui ont fait beaucoup, dans le passé, pour le développement des vocations sacerdotales et la formation des professionnels, ne pourraient-ils pas aider à la multiplication de ces écoles moyennes d'agricultures, dont on espère, avec raison, tant de bien."⁵⁴ Using the "collège classique" to bolster agricultural vocational training was believed to be a good way to attract youth to take up farming opportunities instead of pursuing industrial employment.

Showcasing the positive aspects of living in the countryside compared to the negative conditions in city centers was the second most common approach *Le Droit* used to encourage farming and rural living. In brief, the newspaper printed 28 editorials in its first decade expounding how rural farmers enjoyed a more prosperous and content existence than city-dwelling wage earners.⁵⁵ An early piece suggested, for example, that wartime economic conditions made rewarding industrial work opportunities especially difficult to find. Although some industries flourished from the wartime economy, most had cut production causing significant layoffs.⁵⁶ Cities, the newspaper stated, were consequently filled with unemployed people competing for very few wage opportunities. The editorial's closing paragraph celebrated the benefits of a farming livelihood compared to industrial work in dire urban centers by mentioning:

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Fifteen of these pieces were part of the group of editorials which identified measures to encourage agricultural success. Another 12 belonged to the segment of material deriding rural depopulation.

⁵⁶ Georges Pelletier, "Le retour à la terre", 8/27/1914, 2.

De toute manière, donc, nos gouvernants doivent profiter de la crise actuelle pour conseiller et encourager de manière efficace le retour à la terre des sans-travail d'origine rurale ; la terre les alimentera et leur apportera mieux bon an mal an, que le travail dans les usines où l'homme n'est plus qu'un rouage inférieur aux puissantes machines d'acier qui, elles, trépident et travaillent tout le jour sans fatigue.⁵⁷

The unsigned "Le travail des champs" presented a similar juxtaposition. It focused on the fact that a lack of agricultural workers had left many farmers shorthanded. This situation seemed absurd as "(i)l y a actuellement dans plusieurs villes du Canada, notamment à Ottawa et à Hull, nombre de jeunes gens forts et vigoureux, bien disposés à prendre du travail de quelque sorte qu'il soit, mais qui ne peuvent en trouver."⁵⁸ It then mentioned that more must be done to get youth to see that the countryside offered plentiful work in a comparatively healthy setting. Young people, the editorialist contended, must shun the immoral pleasures typical of urban centers in favour of rural settings where promising livelihoods abound.⁵⁹ A similar case was presented a few years after the war ended. According to *Le Droit*, World War I had shown how industrial labour was extremely challenging, oftentimes dangerous, and very precarious:

La guerre a aussi fait constater combien celui, l'ouvrier surtout, qui lie son sort et sa vie à l'industrie se prépare un lendemain incertain, bien souvent rempli, au moins durant une certaine période de son existence, d'amertume, de regret, de souffrance matérielle et morale. Quand les usines fonctionnent à plein rendement, que le marché va bien, que la main d'œuvre est rare, ça va... Quand vient le revers de la médaille, que la demande est presque nulle, que les ouvriers se nuisent l'un à l'autre en mettant à vil prix leur travail, ses autres choses. La rémunération est insuffisante, injuste, le travailleur est brusqué, même méprisé ; il est le jouet du patronage, de la concurrence impitoyable de ses camarades, en attendant qu'il soit sur le pavé et livré avec sa famille à la faim, à la honte de la mendicité

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Unsigned, "Le travail des champs", 3/28/1916, 1.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

publique ou cachée, aux pleurs, à la démoralisation parfaite.⁶⁰

Interestingly, nearly 30 of these early editorials explicitly argued that choosing an agricultural lifestyle could protect Ontario's French-speaking minority from assimilation.⁶¹ A late 1916 editorial is a prime example of how the newspaper interconnected these themes. It began by stating that French-Canadians leaving Quebec's rural regions for urban centers in the United States "...sont complètement perdus pour la race : du moins, ils ne rendent pas les services qu'ils pourraient pour faire grandir et prospérer notre peuple."⁶² It was then explained that they could be saved if officials in Ontario tailored settlement programs to attract them to the northern part of the province. Diverting these people from the United States, the editorial argued, would give the Ontario French-speaking Catholic minority a much-needed population bump it could leverage to protect its language rights.⁶³

Thomas Poulin followed suit a couple of years later in an editorial which began by imploring readers to complete the Association de la jeunesse Catholique's survey about colonization. According to him, the findings would help identify the leading settlement opportunities and develop badly-needed colonization initiatives.⁶⁴ Franco-Ontarians, he mentioned, should be especially interested in participating in this study since well-designed settlement initiatives would ultimately enhance their economic power:

Il faut que tout le monde mette l'épaule à la roue et
travaille au succès du mouvement qui cherche à enraciner

⁶⁰ Henri Lessard, "Agriculture et industrie", 7/25/1922, 4.

⁶¹ Ten different authors contributed to those 27 editorials. J. Albert Foisy was the most prolific having penned nine editorials followed by Charles Gautier who submitted six. This group of editorials includes: J. Albert Foisy, "Emparons nous du sol", 7/20/1916, 1; Luc Bérard, "Notre sol", 2/6/1920, 1; Fulgence Charpentier, "Une plaie à guérir", 10/18/1923; Henri Lessard, "Pour la colonisation", 9/10/1929, 4; and Camille L'Heureux, "Un discours de M. Guertin", 4/17/1933, 3.

⁶² J. Albert Foisy, "Dans le Nord-Ontario", 12/19/1916, 1.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Thomas Poulin, "Une enquête", 4/22/1918, 1.

de plus en plus au sol canadien. C'est lui qui nous
permettra de refaire notre position économique et il ne faut
pas manquer d'y recourir. Travaillons à placer les familles
qui poussent sur les terres parce que c'est là que grandissent
les nations fortes.⁶⁵

The organ persisted throughout the 1920s in linking an agricultural existence in the countryside to the survival of Ontario's French-speaking minority. A September, 1920 editorial noted that a student agricultural conference at a French-language school in Bourget, Russell County should help arrest the exodus from Ontario's rural regions.⁶⁶ This instructional opportunity, *Le Droit* argued, must be part of a larger set of pro-agricultural programs across Ontario.⁶⁷ The piece then drew from the experience of the Irish Catholic minority in the United States to validate its contention that farming and rural living were protective agents against cultural assimilation. It proclaimed that abandoning farming life for urban industrial work had eroded the American minority's commitment to their faith which led many to marry outside their Irish Catholic culture.⁶⁸ Ontario's French-speaking minority needed to understand that they could also fall prey to cultural erosion if they left the sanctity of rural settings.⁶⁹

General Topic Economy & Business—Subheading Commercial Participation

Although *Le Droit*'s editorial pages consistently exalted the benefits of living in a rural setting off the avails of farming, it did not support this lifestyle exclusively. In fact, a growing share of editorials encouraged taking up salaried occupations as well as launching or growing entrepreneurial ventures in urban centers. The Subheading Commercial Participation was the second leading theme in the General Topic Economy & Business. (See Appendix H: General

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Charles Gautier, "Exposition scolaires", 9/28/1920, 3

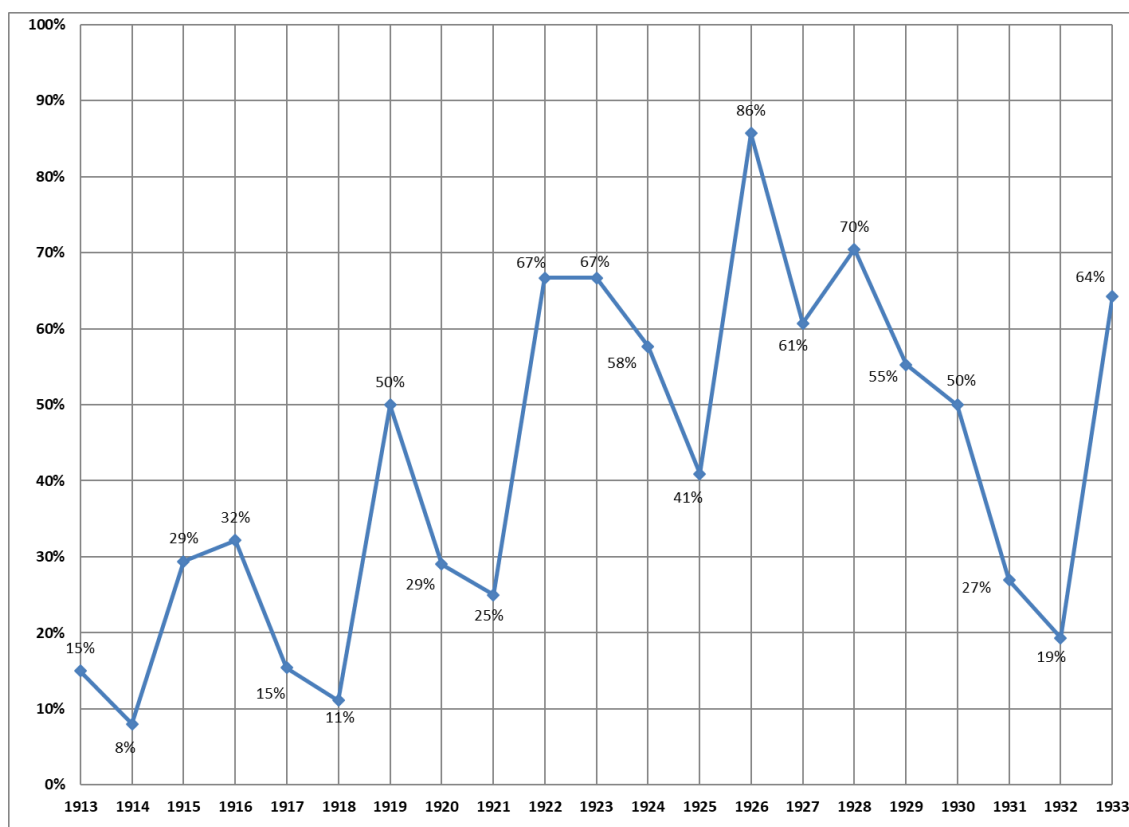
⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Charles Gautier, "Le suicide de la race irlandaise", 12/5/1928, 3

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Topic Economy & Business and its Subheadings per Year) With 259 editorials it ranked first 10 times and second overall eight times. Figure 24 shows how Henri Lessard's arrival at *Le Droit* in 1922 increased the share of the Subheading Commercial Participation in the General Topic Economy & Business.⁷⁰ While roughly 10 opinion pieces about this theme appeared per year to 1921, more than twice as many were published on a year-to-year basis following Lessard joining the daily's editorial staff. (See Appendix H: General Topic Economy & Business and its Subheadings per Year)

Figure 24: Editorial content in the General Topic Economy & Business from the Subheading Commercial Participation



⁷⁰ Although 20 editorialists added content to this Subheading, Henri Lessard was by far the most prolific contributor having penned just over sixty percent of this material. He authored 159 opinion pieces followed by Charles Gautier who was responsible for a relatively paltry 32.

The editorial content from this Subheading falls into four main themes.⁷¹ Promoting commercial/business/industrial ventures on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River was the most prominent subject matter.⁷² The bulk of the 102 editorials focused on strategies to bolster the region's commercial prosperity and develop its industrial workforce. For instance, an early 1920s piece stated that purchasing "foreign" goods undermined local manufacturers who offered very similar products of comparable quality.⁷³ Readers were told that it was their civic duty to favour homegrown products whenever possible.⁷⁴ Enhancing Hull's commercial strength underscored a mid-1920s editorial campaign to convince municipal officials to launch a retail fair to rival Ottawa's Byward Market.⁷⁵ The matter was initially raised in a 1926 piece which complained that the city had not yet pursued the Chamber of Commerce's idea of offering a competing local market.⁷⁶ This venture seemed especially prescient given the fact that politicians had recently mentioned an interest in exploring new, innovative approaches to promote local commerce.⁷⁷ By establishing a market in Hull, *Le Droit* argued, "(n)os gens pourraient acquérir l'habitude d'acheter davantage sur place. Nous aurions un peu plus de vie et de commodité d'approvisionnement dans Hull; nos commerçants garderaient plus de clientèle locale et en

⁷¹ As the fourth theme was mentioned in only 26 editorials it will not be explored qualitatively. It encouraged readers to use French when seeking customer services—for instance, when speaking with telephone operators (18), retail/wholesale clerks (5), or tramway system operators (3). Doing so, the organ argued, would compel employers to hire French-language employees. This content includes: Severin Lavergne, "Le français et le commerce", 4/26/1915, 1; Thomas Poulin, "Histoire vraie", 10/15/1919, 3; Henri Lessard, "Nous montrer ce que nous sommes", 8/8/1924, 4; and Charles Gautier, "Patriotisme pratique", 11/11/1927, 3.

⁷² Lessard penned the greater majority of this content (85) followed by Camille L'Heureux (7) and Charles Gautier (5). These editorials include: Albert Neville, "La maison de l'éducation", 8/24/1914, 1; Charles Michaud, "Monographies économique", 1/20/1925, 3; Henri Lessard, "Enquête sur la petite industrie", 10/29/1929, 4; Henri Lessard, "Saisir l'occasion", 7/8/1932, 4; and Camille L'Heureux, "L'allumière renaît", 4/6/1933, 3.

⁷³ Henri Lessard, "Le commerce local", 3/29/1923, 4.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Henri Lessard authored 10 editorials from 1926 to 1928 encouraging officials in Hull to launch their own commercial market.

⁷⁶ The agency had apparently made the case for examining the potential to launch a market in Hull a few years back but a commercial study had never been carried out. Henri Lessard, "Le projet d'un marché", 7/12/1926, 4.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

attireraient du dehors.”⁷⁸ Politicians and businessmen eventually launched a pilot market to gauge public interest and test the commercial viability of this type of initiative. *Le Droit*’s editorial space encouraged everyone to enthusiastically patronise this upstart venture. It was mentioned a few weeks into the pilot period that, although some doubted the viability of a local market, support thus far seemed to be proving the naysayers wrong.⁷⁹ The early success should convince everyone that local producers, wholesalers and retailers had nothing to lose from turning the “test market” into a permanent fixture. According to the organ:

La fréquentation du marché par un grand nombre de clients est évidemment le meilleur moyen d’y attirer encore plus de producteurs. Ceux-ci ne manquent pas de se renseigner entre eux, de faire de la propagande dans leur entourage, de sorte que si l’on a de bonnes nouvelles à communiquer sur l’encouragement que les citoyens de Hull donnent à leur marché, celui-ci recevra en retour sur une plus grande échelle l’encouragement des maraîchers et des cultivateurs.⁸⁰

It was mentioned at the end of the editorial that *Le Droit* would continue to promote this initiative as it was exactly the type of progressive commercial undertaking required to build the region’s economic strength and grow its urban labour force.

The organ relied on a very similar approach in the late 1920s and early 1930s when it encouraged small- to medium-sized industries.⁸¹ This campaign originated in a late 1927 editorial commending Édouard Montpetit, a renowned economist and academic from Quebec, for wanting more municipal policies that favoured craft industries instead of large commercial or

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Henri Lessard, “Le marché”, 9/27/1927, 4.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Thirteen editorials supporting craft industries appeared between the end of 1927 to the Fall of 1932. These opinion pieces include: Henri Lessard, “Ses bienfaits”, 2/17/1928, 4; Henri Lessard, “Enquête sur la petite industrie”, 10/29/1929, 4; and Henri Lessard, “Les petites industries”, 8/26/1932, 4

industrial endeavours. According to the piece, the local Chamber of Commerce should adopt Montpetit's idea given that few people in the region had ample capital to finance large-scale enterprises.⁸² Instituting numerous small- and medium-sized businesses "...est une façon au moins aussi avantageuse que (la grande industrie) de procurer du travail à nos gens, de garder et d'accroître notre population, comme tous le demandent à grands cris et en toutes occasions."⁸³ The subsequent "Pour la petite industrie" contended that modestly-sized enterprises were especially advantageous since they encouraged social cohesion and promoted economic stability.⁸⁴ Large scale industries were, on the contrary, apt to foment socio-economic turmoil and class warfare:

Plusieurs petits établissements industriels offrent moins de dangers que quelques grande pour la paix sociale et le risque du chômage. Chez les grosses compagnies, en effet, il y a un grand nombre d'employés de diverses catégories et les troubles sociaux ont plus de facilités d'y naître et de prendre de l'ampleur. Une grande industrie ne se livre d'ordinaire qu'à la fabrication d'un produit, et en temps de crise économique affectant sérieusement ce produit, c'est par centaines que les ouvriers chôment et sont acculés à la misère.⁸⁵

In the early 1930s the newspaper initiated a self-serving editorial campaign at a time when the Great Depression was hurting its bottom line. It printed numerous editorials claiming that newspaper advertising was an effective strategy to boost lagging commercial activity. Savvy entrepreneurs, *Le Droit* mentioned, wholeheartedly recognized the business case for investing in marketing.⁸⁶ Moreover, those who were reluctant to advertise their wares "...peuvent offrir de la marchandise d'aussi bonne qualité et à aussi bon marché (que ceux qui utilisent les annonces),

⁸² Henri Lessard, "La petite industrie", 11/24/1927, 4.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Henri Lessard, "Pour la petite industrie", 10/18/1929, 4.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Charles Gautier, "L'annonce par le journal", 4/10/1931, 3.

mais, à cause de l'annonce faite par leurs concurrentes, elles resteront stagnantes et végéteront.”⁸⁷ This line of argument came up again the following spring as the economic collapse approached its third year. In this instance, it was stated that businesses should advertise their products and/or services to prime the struggling economy.⁸⁸ Newspaper advertising, it said, would inject much-needed funds into the marketplace while enticing the public to spend. Richard Léopold similarly claimed in 1932's “L'annonce dans le journal—le grand levier du commerce” that advertising was a sure-fire way in tough economic times to encourage commerce.⁸⁹ He contended that businessmen needed to resist curtailing advertising expenses when the economy soured this would exacerbate the slowdown.

Le Droit's editorials also focused on numerous civic initiatives it thought were instrumental to vibrant commercial sectors. Much of the early attention focused on encouraging Hull's Chamber of Commerce to play a greater role in promoting the city's economic development. For instance, the newspaper argued that the civic body needed to steward local stakeholders to draft a strategic plan to nurture the local economy.⁹⁰ It also told readers interested in seeing the local economy grow to support the agency's work.⁹¹ This plea was reiterated a few years later as the Chamber struggled to recruit members from all sectors and was short on capital to carry out its mission. “Un organisme nécessaire” stated that having a broad spectrum of participants at the table would ensure that the Chamber's economic initiatives represented all sectors of the local business community.⁹² Supporting it was imperative as it was “...un

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Charles Gautier, “Crise et publicité”, 4/27/1932, 3.

⁸⁹ Richard Léopold, “L'annonce dans le journal—le grand levier du commerce”, 12/13/1932, 3.

⁹⁰ Henri Lessard, “Une organisation importante”, 11/2/1922, 4.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Henri Lessard, “Un organisme nécessaire”, 2/27/1928, 4.

organisme nécessaire au progrès et à la prospérité d'une ville...".⁹³ *Le Droit*'s efforts appeared to have been less than successful as an editorial appeared the following year positing that the Chamber, crippled by an ongoing lack of participation and resources, was falling well-short of meeting its mandate. Although some progress had been made, much more could be accomplished if the Chamber had adequate support:

Avec ces ressources, notre Chambre de commerce pourrait être plus active, nouer et entretenir des relations avec des associations du même genre dans notre province, le pays ou de l'étranger, figurer avec honneur et avantage dans des circonstances particulières où il serait bon qu'elle ne fût absente.⁹⁴

Le Droit altered its pro-development approach in the late 1920s by reducing the amount of content promoting the work of the Chamber of Commerce. It instead offered an increasing share of pieces arguing that publicly promoting the region's commercial potential was an effective way to lure commercial investors. "Une active propagande" was the first editorial which asked officials to leverage "industrial propaganda" to showcase Hull's commercial assets and notable business achievements.⁹⁵ It noted that it was very positive that the city had decided to circulate documents to "...des centaines de capitalistes et d'industriels afin de connaître les avantages de la ville de Hull, paraît bien vu des efforts et devrait rapporter au moins quelques résultats."⁹⁶ Doing so was an ingenious way to drum up much-needed financial investments to increase the city's economic capacity. A subsequent editorial declared that the city's Directeur, Bureau municipal de publicité had rightly tabled a business brief detailing how "industrial propaganda" was instrumental to attracting commercial investments.⁹⁷ *Le Droit* quite optimistically stated that

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Henri Lessard, "Activités de la chambre", 3/26/29, 4.

⁹⁵ Henri Lessard, "Une active propagande", 9/20/1928, 4.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Henri Lessard, "Bureau municipale de publicité", 6/1/1929, 4.

the Director "...est certain que le conseil, entièrement gagné à la cause de notre progrès, donnera à ces suggestions toute l'attention qu'elles méritent."⁹⁸ The newspaper believed the city should complement any "industrial propaganda" with other measures. Venture capitalists, its editorialists asserted, were more likely to invest in the region if the city courted them directly. For instance, "Saisir l'occasion" from 1932 celebrated Hull's decision to personally reach out to foreign luminaries at the upcoming Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa:

On y donnera suite en organisant la distribution parmi
les délégués d'une brochure sur Hull qui est toute prête.
Et si possible, on fera visiter aux distingués personnages
telle ou telle entreprise industrielle de chez nous, plus
probablement nos plus récentes usines hydroélectriques
qui utilisent la plus riche ressource de notre région.⁹⁹

The piece closed by criticising officials from Hull for having missed an opportunity to court delegates of the Congress of Canadian Manufacturers recently gathered in Ottawa. This oversight, it was argued, should not happen again as the city needed to use every means at its disposal to increase its commercial power.

Encouraging Ontario's French-speaking Catholics to use economic nationalism to grow their wealth was the second most common argument in the Subheading Commercial Participation. *Le Droit* published just short of one-hundred editorials imploring readers to use this approach to build the group's financial strength.¹⁰⁰ Doing so, *Le Droit's* editorialists were convinced, would allow the minority to gain its economic independence. Its resultant economic

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Henri Lessard, "Saisir l'occasion", 7/8/1932, 4.

¹⁰⁰ Eleven editorialists contributed to the 98 opinion pieces. Henri Lessard (56) authored the majority followed by Charles Gautier (15). These editorials include: J. Albert Foisy, "Snobisme malheureux", 7/22/1916, 1; Charles Gautier, "Notre prospérité économique", 7/9/1921, 3; Henri Lessard, "Occasion favorable", 12/11/1924, 4; Henri Lessard, "Une voie nouvelle", 5/2/1928, 4; Richard Léopold, "Une publication de l'École des hautes études commerciales de Montréal", 12/15/1931, 3; and Camille L'Heureux, "Québec importe trop", 2/20/1933, 3.

force could be leveraged into political clout to guarantee its survival.¹⁰¹ *Le Droit* explained this strategy in “Notre indépendance économique” on February 27, 1915. It began by noting that asking readers to resort to economic nationalism should not be interpreted as a call to arms against the provincial majority. The organ maintained that “(n)ous ne voulons pas la guerre à personne, nous sommes à notre corps défendant; nous ne voulons aucunement isoler notre peuple, nous désirons tout simplement le rendre fort pour qu’il ne soit pas broyé pas les éléments qu’il coudoie.”¹⁰² The following month the newspaper took the exceptional measure of printing an editorial in English to counter a local English-language newspaper’s claim that promoting economic nationalism sowed the seeds of ethnic conflict. The editorial began by reiterating why Franco-Ontarians should resort to economic nationalism:

We (f)requently made reference to the urgency for (French-speaking Catholics in Ontario) to acquire, sooner or later, our independence from an economic standpoint, if we desire to enjoy our share of influence as a distinct element in Ontario. Until now French-Canadian have purchased their requirements from either the English or French. Often they have favored to the detriment of their dearest interests, most hostile establishments, but the contest which is now being made against the french (sic) language has caused many to reflect, particularly those whose hearts are in the right spot.¹⁰³

Under these circumstances, *Le Droit* felt that it had little choice but to encourage readers to use economic nationalism. The daily was therefore proud to promote Quebec’s Fraserville Boot and Shoe Manufacturing Company because it “...subscribe(s) to the fund of the ‘Wounded of

¹⁰¹ *Le Droit* printed 65 editorials pinpointing a number of practices to be used in the spirit of economic nationalism. In one case, readers were told to favour retailers, wholesalers, financial institutions and insurance firms owned by French-speaking Catholics. It likewise asked readers to use French when conducting commercial transactions to force business owners to retain French-speaking employees. These editorials include: Unsigned, “Est-ce le point faible ?”, 3/4/1915, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “Les Canadiens-français et le placement de leurs épargnes”, 6/16/1917, 1; Charles Gautier, “Nous le tuons pas !”, 5/27/1921, 1; Charles Gautier, “Du patriotisme pratique”, 6/1/1925, 3; and Charles Gautier, “Un service bilingue”, 5/2/1931, 3.

¹⁰² Unsigned, “Notre indépendance économique”, 2/27/1915, 1.

¹⁰³ Unsigned, “Voluntary bad faith”, 3/5/1915, 1.

Ontario', one percent of its sales in the province of Ontario, and this is not only for the past year but for years to come. It is therefore an annual revenue of many hundreds of dollars for the good cause."¹⁰⁴ Purchasing goods from this company allowed French-Canadians to "...contribute to the defence of our interests, we assure the future of our element in struggling for our independence from an economic point of view."¹⁰⁵ The case for using economic nationalism to protect the language rights of the province's French-speaking minority was reiterated in a 1918 front page editorial. This piece claimed that the time had come for Franco-Ontarians to use all means available to defend their rights: "...il nous faut nous rapprocher, nous unir, mettre nos énergies, nos forces en commun pour mieux livrer la lutte déjà engagée."¹⁰⁶ Increasing the group's economic power would enhance its political force:

C'est par l'organisation économique que nous pourrons
tenir tête à l'orage et garder notre place au soleil canadien.
Puisqu'on veut de plus en plus abattre l'arbre français,
faisons-lui pousser des racines assez puissantes pour faire
monter une sève toujours plus abondante dans les branches
qui peuvent menacer de se dessécher sous les coups
toujours plus violents qui pleuvent de toutes parts.¹⁰⁷

"Notre émancipation économique" by long-time editorialist Charles Gautier similarly claimed that resorting to economic nationalism would help ensure the group's survival. This 1922 piece pointed to a speech given by journalist Olivar Asselin to the Montreal Chamber of Commerce explaining how economic nationalism was an effective rampart against cultural assimilation.¹⁰⁸ *Le Droit* believed wholeheartedly in this approach. It told its readers to use all tactics to pool their limited wealth to stop the province's English-language Protestant majority from abrogating their minority rights:

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Poulin, "Organisons nous", 1/14/1918, 1.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Charles Gautier, "Notre émancipation économique", 11/24/1922, 3.

Un de nos principaux devoirs est de diriger nos capitaux vers des maisons canadiennes-françaises, qu'il s'agisse de placement, de commerce, ou d'assurance. Le bon sens, le patriotisme et l'esprit de conservation le demandent impérieusement. La race canadienne-française tend de plus en plus vers l'indépendance économique, prélude de la liberté politique. Que chacun ait à cœur d'être un des artisans, quelques humbles soit-il, du succès final.¹⁰⁹

The newspaper even went so far in a later piece to contend that advertising in *Le Droit* was an ideal way of leveraging economic nationalism to protect the language rights of Ontario's French-speaking community:

Il n'y a pas aujourd'hui, dans la province d'Ontario, beaucoup de Canadiens français qui ne sont pas convaincus de la nécessité d'avoir un journal, à eux, qui défende leur cause et protège leurs intérêts. Eh bien ! soyons pratiques et encourageons les annonceurs qui, par l'intermédiaire de notre journal, recherchent la clientèle française. Encourageons-les non pas inconsciemment comme pourrait le faire tout lecteur habituel d'un journal, mais avec conviction, c'est-à-dire en achetant chez eux et en leur faisant savoir qu'ils doivent notre clientèle aux annonces qu'ils publient dans le « Droit ».¹¹⁰

Le Droit continued to print editorials encouraging French-speaking Catholics to use economic nationalism to defend their rights after provincial authorities abandoned Regulation 17. For instance, in early 1930 the argument was made that the economic success of the Quebec-based insurance firm La Sauvegarde was an apt example of how economic nationalism promoted economic independence crucial to the long-term survival of minority groups.¹¹¹ The editorialist was concerned that Franco-Ontarians, since the threat of Regulation 17 was no longer in play, might become too complacent about the security of their rights. Readers needed to remain vigilant even though they had won this significant battle. Repeating its calls to use economic

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Charles Gautier, "Le journal et l'annonce", 6/30/1927, 3.

¹¹¹ Charles Gautier, "La Sauvegarde", 6/14/1932, 3.

nationalism was part of the organ's core mission of seeking to protect the Franco-Ontarian minority from assimilation. It was also an evident manifestation of the daily's campaign to get Franco-Ontarians to take proactive measures to defend themselves against the province's majority.

Countering the commonly-held notion that French-Canadians were not fundamentally predisposed to succeed in business or commerce was the third most popular theme presented in the Subheading Commercial Participation.¹¹² According to this content, steps were needed to disprove the assumption that French-Canadians were inherently disinclined to be good businessmen. The daily delved into this issue by excoriating French-speaking businessmen who adopted English business names because they believed it would enhance their firm's credibility.¹¹³ This practice, *Le Droit* affirmed, was a manifestation of a larger problem whereby "...un grand nombre des nôtres, français de cœur et d'action, dès qu'ils franchissent le seuil des affaires, s'enveloppent d'un voile purement Anglais."¹¹⁴ According to the editorial, this harmful strategy was born out of the conviction that cultural traits undermined French-speaking people from succeeding in business. The newspaper presented this argument again a few years later in an editorial which noted that accepting English as the default "language of the business world" subtly reinforces the presumption that French-Canadians do not have a rightful place in this field.¹¹⁵ It was certainly natural to use English in business settings where a majority of the

¹¹² Fifteen editorialists contributed to the 50 opinion pieces printed regularly from 1913 to 1933 about this matter. Henri Lessard penned the most of these editorials (15) followed by Charles Gautier (8) and J. Albert Foisy (5). These opinion pieces include: J. Albert Foisy, "Une entente économique", 7/5/1916, 1; Charles Gautier, "Il nous faudrait plus de français", 10/11/1920, 1; Henri Lessard, "Une leçon de fierté", 12/10/1924, 4; and Richard Léopold, "Pour une doctrine", 10/3/1931, 3.

¹¹³ Waldo Guertin, "Pourquoi pas en français ?", 7/15/1915, 1.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ J. Albert Foisy, "Gare à l'Anglicisation", 1/14/1920, 1.

population is English-speaking, yet it should not be assumed that the French-language and, by association, French-people, did not belong in commerce.¹¹⁶

Showcasing successful French-owned businesses, the newspaper believed, could erode the assumption that English-Canadians were the rightful leaders of the business sector. “Des raisons d’optimisme”, for instance, stated that the annual Ottawa Central Exhibition included several thriving French-led businesses. *Le Droit* proclaimed:

Si la valeur des produits exposés ne nous inspire aucun motif de découragement pour l’avenir de notre pays, le nombre de nos compatriotes qui profitent de l’occasion pour se faire connaître nous laisse enchantés de voir que nos maisons canadiennes-françaises ont d’agréables étalages généralement bien achalandés.¹¹⁷

A similar piece which appeared at about the same time asserted that the prejudice against having French-speaking people participate in commerce and industry seemed to be waning even though the bias “...avait hélas ! des partisans crédules, même parmi les nôtres qui, poussés par un utilitarisme de dangereux aloi, ou par simple snobisme, répandaient la doctrine que l’anglais est la langue du commerce et des affaires, et que le français doit être confiné au foyer.”¹¹⁸ The work accomplished by the Écoles des hautes études commerciales de Montréal, it was believed, had served to extinguish “...cette malheureuse théorie, car elle procure à tous les Canadiens de langue française le moyen d’acquérir des données exactes sur différentes sciences essentielles pour notre développement financier, et cela de notre propre idiome.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Fulgence Charpentier, “Des raisons d’optimisme”, 9/12/1923, 3.

¹¹⁸ Fulgence Charpentier, “Une légende qui disparaît”, 11/3/1924, 3.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

It would appear that the prediction was premature as *Le Droit* revisited the matter five years later. The broadsheet took exception with a few recent studies that claimed that cultural variables undermined French-speaking people from succeeding in business and finance. Specifically, it concluded “(que l’Anglo-saxon) est l’homme d’affaires par tempérament. (Le Canadien français) c’est l’homme plus préoccupé d’idéalisme que de réalité (par conséquent de son ascendance latine).”¹²⁰ The existence of several thriving French-Canadian led multi-million dollar firms undermined this argument. The editorial closed by expounding:

En 1760, nous n’avions que notre énergie. Elle s’est traduite aujourd’hui par des centaines de millions et par des progrès qui soutiennent la comparaison avec les progrès similaires des autres provinces. Pour une classe de gens qui serait douée d’un sens économique atrophié, on l’admettra ce n’est pas trop mal. Mettons donc au rancart ce préjugé de l’inaptitude économique du Canada français et l’explication boiteuse de ce préjugé par notre ascendance latine.¹²¹

“Sommes-nous si inférieurs ?” from early 1933 contended that French-Canadians must ignore the presumption that they did not belong in the world of commerce, finance and industry. It disagreed that the only way for French-Canadians to be successful in these sectors was “...qu’en apprenant mieux et de plus en plus l’anglais, en affichant moins notre catholicisme, en reproduisant avantage chez nous les qualités de nos concitoyens anglais.”¹²² *Le Droit* even predicted that in a few decades the country would have an equal number of French- and English-led firms.¹²³ Overcoming this long held bias, the daily thought, would free French-speaking Catholic Ontarians to gain their economic independence and, by consequence, better protect their minority rights.

¹²⁰ Camille L’Heureux, “Le Canada français économique”, 6/10/1929, 3.

¹²¹ Ibid.

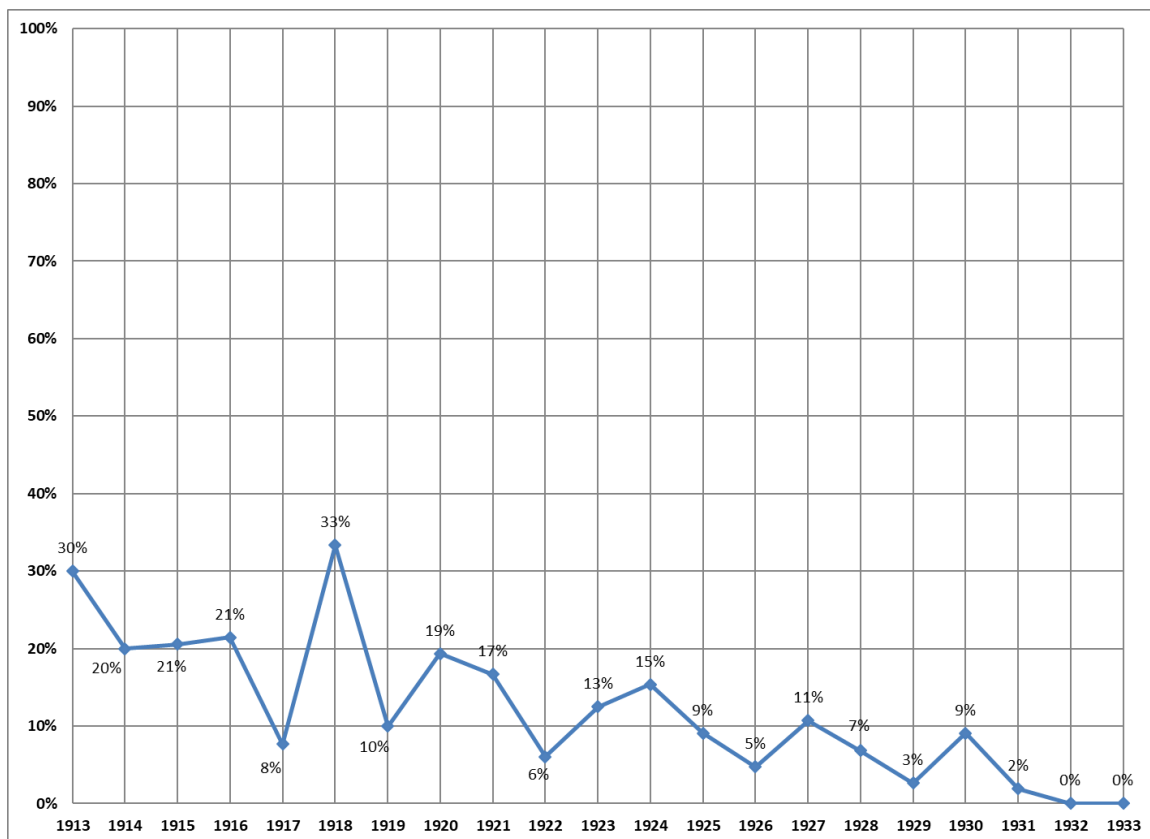
¹²² Henri Lessard, “Sommes-nous si inférieurs ?”, 1/16/1933, 4.

¹²³ Ibid.

General Topic Economy & Business—Subheading Cooperatives

The Subheading Cooperatives is the third most important subject of the General Topic Economy & Business. The newspaper printed 66 editorials from 1913 to 1933 asserting that French-speaking Catholic Ontarians should rely on commercial, financial, and insurance cooperatives.¹²⁴ This theme ranked second five times and third 14 times over the twenty-year period.¹²⁵ (See Appendix H: General Topic Economy & Business and its Subheadings per Year) Figure 25 shows this Subheading was fairly important to 1921 but that it then lost ground from that point to 1933.

Figure 25: Editorial content in the General Topic Economy & Business from the Subheading Cooperatives



¹²⁴ This material includes: Unsigned, “La coopération”, 10/1/1913, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “Un moyen infaillible”, 12/1/1916, 1; Henri Lessard, “Le chemin de l’épargne”, 9/25/1922, 4; Henri Lessard, “Le crédit populaire”, 2/16/1928, 4; and Henri Lessard, “La Caisse Populaire”, 12/23/1931, 4.

¹²⁵ Thirteen editorialists contributed to this content. Henri Lessard penned the most opinion pieces (21) followed by J. Albert Foisy (10) and J. Edmond Cloutier (5).

It is not surprising that *Le Droit* printed a relatively healthy share of editorials promoting cooperatives as the Catholic Church enthusiastically supported the cooperative movement. In brief, the Church sanctioned the cooperative business approach as it was rooted in supporting those with limited means.¹²⁶ Cooperative ventures certainly seemed tailor made for Ontario's relatively poor French-speaking Catholics.¹²⁷ The early success of L'Union Saint-Joseph d'Ottawa shows that Franco-Ontarians recognised the value of the cooperative approach. Although this mutual-support insurance company counted only 824 members at the turn of the century, its membership had grown to a staggering 30,000 by 1940.¹²⁸ Slightly less than one-third of the sixty-six editorials explained that countering the rising cost of living was reason enough to join cooperatives.¹²⁹ For instance, "Les coopératives" explained that retail cooperatives greatly benefited consumers as they removed the "middlemen" who inflated prices.¹³⁰ Franco-Ontarians were consequently told to form their own retail cooperatives.¹³¹ A late 1916 piece mentioned that war-time inflation was a prime reason for readers to join retail cooperatives.¹³² According to it, the most useful way to fight the rising cost of living "... (est de) s'organiser lui-même et il n'a certainement pas de meilleur moyen à sa disposition que la

¹²⁶ Hamelin and Gagnon, *Histoire du catholicisme québécois*, Tome I, 276.

¹²⁷ In brief, socio-economic explorations of the province at the beginning of the twentieth-century show that almost all medium- and large-scale enterprises and the financial sector were controlled by English-speaking Ontarians. French-Canadians meanwhile were disproportionately represented in lower-paid, unskilled occupations. Ouellet, "Économie et société minoritaires", 115. Those in the agricultural sector were in the main very marginal producers with small scale farms. Jean-Pierre Gaboury, "La vie politique de l'Ontario français" in *Actes du Colloque sur la Situation de la recherche sur la vie française en Ontario* (Ottawa : ACFAS, 1975), 110 and Gervais, "L'Ontario français, 1821-1910", 97. Paul-François Sylvestre's *Nos entrepreneurs : premier panorama* (Ottawa : Éditions L'Interligne, 1996) offers a few explanations why Ontario's French-speaking Catholics were over-represented in the lower rungs of the province's socio-economic ladder. The much earlier "La participation des Franco-Ontariens dans la vie économique de l'Ontario" by Roméo Grenier (Thèse de sciences commerciales. Montréal : Écoles des hautes études commerciales, 1937) also provides valuable insight into the matter.

¹²⁸ Vallières, *L'Ontario français par les documents*, 187 and 191.

¹²⁹ Eighteen editorials explored this issue including: Caisse Nationale d'Économie, "La coopération et le coût de la vie", 10/21/1913, 1; J. Albert Foisy, "À la portée de tous", 5/7/1919, 1; and Charles Gautier, "Une belle initiative", 5/19/1921, 1.

¹³⁰ Unsigned, "Les coopératives", 2/25/1914, 1.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Thomas Poulin, "Une solution pratique", 10/7/1916, 1.

coopération.”¹³³ The daily continued its pro-cooperative campaign as inflation plagued the post-war years. Cooperatives, 1921’s “Continuons” maintained, allowed the working-class to make ends meet in the face of mounting expenses and relatively stagnant wages.¹³⁴ This argument was certain to strike a chord with French-speaking Catholic Ontarians who, in general, took home modest paychecks at a time when the cost of living was climbing.

Promoting the Caisse Populaire Desjardins was a central focus of *Le Droit*’s editorial content encouraging cooperatives. By all standards the rise of this French-led credit union was remarkable. While Alphonse Desjardins launched his first financial cooperative near Quebec City in late 1906, 220 of them were in place by 1920 including 24 in Ontario and nine in the United States.¹³⁵ From 1913 to 1933 *Le Droit* printed 48 opinion pieces claiming that the Caisse Populaire offered several benefits compared to typical commercial banks.¹³⁶ These editorials made the case, for instance, that credit unions used an advantageous community-building business model. Case in point, “Les Caisses Populaires” mentioned that financial cooperatives, unlike commercial banks, are not obsessed with raising stakeholder dividends.¹³⁷ On the contrary, credit unions were primarily concerned with ensuring that their members have access to cheap capital to build their communities. The newspaper repeated its call to avoid commercial banks in favour of the Caisse Populaire Desjardins in a piece that explained how “(l)a caisse

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Thomas Poulin, “Continuons”, 2/21/1921, 1.

¹³⁵ “Histoire de Desjardins” Mouvement Desjardins (consulted on February 14, 2015) <https://www.desjardins.com/a-propos/desjardins/qui-nous-sommes/notre-histoire-musee/index.jsp#onglet-historique>. For more on this topic, see Yves Roby, *Alphonse Desjardins et les caisses populaires, 1854-1920* (Montréal : Fides, 1964), Ronald Rudin, “In Whose Interest? The Early Years of the First Caisse Populaire, 1900-1945” (Historical Papers / Communications historiques, Volume 22, numéro 1, 1987), 157-177, and Paul Morency, *Alphonse Desjardins et le Catéchisme des caisses populaires* (Québec : Septentrion, 2000).

¹³⁶ Twelve editorialists contributed to this content. Henri Lessard penned by far the most opinion pieces (21) followed by J. Albert Foisy (7) and Pierre du Pont (3). These editorials include: Unsigned, “Ce que c’est”, 5/21/1913, 1; J. Albert Foisy, “Lettre à Monsieur X...”, 3/28/1917, 1; Henri Lessard, “La Caisse Notre Dame”, 12/17/1924, 4; and Henri Lessard, “À propos des Caisse Populaires”, 3/3/1930, 4.

¹³⁷ Aubrey Jérôme, “Les Caisses Populaires”, 4/7/1913, 1.

populaire n'est pas une entreprise financière pour les messieurs qui remuent l'or avec des pelles, c'est un œuvre pour encourager et aider ceux qui ne peuvent épargner que quelques sous à la fois.”¹³⁸ Credit unions should be encouraged as they provided small, affordable loans to low- and middle-class earners instead of focusing on financing the large ventures of the wealthy few.

A piece heralding the opening of a branch in Hull's Notre Dame Parish by Henri Lessard trumpeted another advantage of the Caisses Populaires. More specifically, the editorial pointed out that these institutions had lending guidelines which ensured any money they loaned benefited the local community.¹³⁹ According to the newspaper, “(l')argent n'est pas entassé inutilement dans les coffres. Il est à la disposition des emprunteurs. Ceux-ci doivent être des actionnaires. On ne prête pas à des étrangers; on ne prête pas non plus au commerce ni à la grande industrie anonyme, qui fait perdre parfois tant de milliers de dollars.”¹⁴⁰ The organ's campaign in favour of credit unions compared to commercial banks continued throughout the remainder of the 1920s. For instance, a 1928 editorial claimed that a recent merger in the financial sector of two large corporate banking institutions meant that financial power would be further concentrated in a handful of establishments.¹⁴¹ Encouraging a Caisse Populaire Desjardins, it was believed, was the only way to stop the centralisation of financial power which increased borrowing costs and led to higher financial service fees. *Le Droit's* consistent support of credit unions like the Caisse Populaire Desjardins coincided with its other editorial campaigns encouraging wealth-building strategies anchored in community economic development. Relying on these organizations also

¹³⁸ J. Albert Foisy, “Encore les caisses populaires”, 7/13/1916, 1.

¹³⁹ Henri Lessard, “Œuvre à encourager”, 9/12/1923, 4.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Henri Lessard, “La décentralisation des capitaux”, 8/7/1928, 4.

squared perfectly, as we have seen, with the campaign to have Franco-Ontarians resort to economic nationalism to build their wealth.

In a few instances, *Le Droit* directly linked cooperative financial institutions to the survival of Ontario's French-speaking minority. The newspaper published 18 editorials from 1914 to 1931 to this effect.¹⁴² An early example of this content stated that investing in these institutions "...c'est le meilleur moyen sinon le seul de lutter avantageusement contre ceux qui ont juré notre perte. Nous savons aujourd'hui plus que jamais que c'est l'argent qui fait foi de tout."¹⁴³ It was similarly asserted in a 1918 editorial that credit unions are a practical way for minority populations with relatively modest means to gain their financial independence:

Plus que jamais il est temps de grouper nos économies chez nous afin de garder pour nous le contrôle de nos capitaux. Plus que jamais nous devons nous exercer à l'économie, les circonstances nous le conseillent et les jours qui viennent nous en font un devoir de stricte justice envers nous-mêmes et envers nos familles.¹⁴⁴

Using a Caisse Populaire Desjardins, the newspaper contended, allowed customers to limit their expenses while giving their brethren easier access to credit to build their own wealth. Using community-based credit unions to promote the minority's survival was repeated in an early 1920s editorial which stated:

La Caisse Populaire facilite l'épargne reconnue nécessaire de tout temps pour réussir dans la vie, et puiser la force de résistance et les concours nécessaires pour développer ses énergies, agrandir son action, aider ses initiatives et consolider son existence. L'épargne accroîtra notre fortune nationale, grandira son prestige qui nous aidera à étendre

¹⁴² These editorials include: Albert Neville, "Notre indépendance économique", 9/21/1914, 1; J. Albert Foisy, "Encore les caisses populaires", 7/13/1916, 1; Henri Lessard, "L'épargne scolaire", 4/21/1923, 3; and Henri Lessard, "La Caisse Populaire", 12/23/1931, 4.

¹⁴³ Pierre du Pont, "Le secret de vaincre", 11/26/1914, 1.

¹⁴⁴ J. Albert Foisy, "Petite mais féconde", 12/23/1918, 1.

le domaine de notre légitime influence.¹⁴⁵

This specific claim was linked to the many arguments *Le Droit* presented in other editorials associating commercial participation and wealth building to the Ontario French-language Catholic minority's survival. The minority, these pieces collectively argued, was more likely to withstand acculturation by growing its financial wealth and gaining its economic independence.

Conclusion

The General Topic Economy & Business includes an assortment of opinions related to work/lifestyle. Over the first few years, much was said about the advantages of farming and living in a rural setting. These editorials mirrored the positions found in *L'Action catholique* and the like. As of the 1920, *Le Droit* broke from other "bonne presse" organs who remained wedded to encouraging traditional rural lifestyles. It was at this point that the share of editorials promoting an agricultural lifestyle progressively decreased. At the same time, the newspaper increasingly touted wage-related employment opportunities as well as business initiatives to increase the region's commercial and industrial sectors. Although this represented a significant reversal about how French-Canadians should lead their lives, *Le Droit* used similar arguments when making the case for either options. Readers were told that farming and residing in a rural setting were protective agents against assimilation. Similarly, the newspaper argued in favour of increasing the commercial sector and associated wage-based jobs because they would increase the community's economic independence. This objective underscored *Le Droit's* endorsement of economic nationalism. Having a measure of financial freedom from the majority, the daily argued, would provide the province's French-Canadians much-needed economic clout to leverage in the political arena to protect their rights. The same argument was tabled in *Le Droit's*

¹⁴⁵ Marc Marchessault, "La Caisse Populaire", 8/5/1921, 1.

campaign to convince Franco-Ontarians to join retail and financial cooperatives. Money saved by using these types of institutions could be redirected to gain influence to assure the minority's survival.

CHAPTER SIX

Le Droit's outlook on class relations

The previous three chapters focused on some of the most prominent viewpoints in four General Topics—Values & Ideals, Family, Education, and Economy & Business. As could be expected, many of the arguments were explicitly about promoting the survival of Ontario's province's French-speaking Catholic minority. The views in the General Topic Labour Relations break from this pattern as none are related to safeguarding the group's minority rights to protect it from assimilation. Without this unique Ontario-specific perspective, the positions reflect the organ's other core priority, promoting Catholic ideals. They are almost identical to the opinions expressed in Quebec's French-language organs similarly devoted to spreading the doctrines of the Catholic Church.¹ A case in point was *Le Droit's* repeated claim that the Church believed people should join trade unions to ensure they worked under fair conditions for decent wages. Likewise, a significant share of the newspaper's editorial space encouraged upstart Catholic unions, while undermining neutral international unions. These campaigns represented much of the content in the General Topic Labour Relations from 1913 to late 1929. A smaller stake was devoted to exploring the social discord which fomented the rise of the labour movement. Selfish business practices, the organ believed, sparked working class discontent. Although *Le Droit* was convinced that unscrupulous industrialists were to blame for the escalating social tensions, *Le Droit* opposed radical socio-economic changes encouraged by some. Much of the General Topic

¹ The ideological similarities pertaining to this subject are not surprising given the ties between *Le Droit's* early editorialists and Quebec's most influential Catholic organ. For instance, J. Albert Foisy, who wrote 909 editorials while at *Le Droit* and served as Editor-in-Chief from 1917 to 1920, joined *L'Action catholique's* in 1920. Thomas Poulin, likewise a founding editorialist at the Oblate-newspaper who penned 409 opinion pieces, joined *L'Action catholique's* editorial staff in 1922. He held this position until his untimely death in 1934. Meanwhile *Le Droit's* Charles Gautier, although he never worked for the Quebec-based newspaper, was oftentimes cited in *L'Action catholique* in the 1910s and 1920s. Jones, 26.

Labour Relations from 1929 to 1933 in fact focused on promoting moderate solutions in the hopes that socialists and communists would not gain influence. Although the daily had always opposed socialism and communism, editorials in this period called for a very different strategy to stem their momentum. *Le Droit*'s first approach focused upon telling readers that socialism and communism lead to devastating social changes. It was hoped that this tactic would be enough to stop people from joining these movements. The advent of the Great Depression saw the newspaper turn to promoting much more aggressive measures. It was at this time that it began asking government officials to implement legislation to eliminate these threats.

General Topic Labour Relations—Subheading Organized Labour

A quantitative examination of the share of editorial content from the General Topic Labour Relations between 1913 and 1933 reveals a disjointed pattern. From the moment the organ appeared to the end of First World War fewer than 20 opinion pieces were printed per year about this subject. (See Appendix C: General Topics per Year and Appendix D: General Topics per Year by Rank) It resultantly represented less than five percent of the overall editorial material to the end of the decade. The Russian Revolution in 1917 and the Winnipeg General Strike two years later prompted the daily to print more content about this theme.² Adding a standalone page for Quebec readers in 1922 also increased the share of this content. The General Topic Labour Relations benefited greatly from this decision as it was a favourite subject of those

² An eight-week long labour stoppage at *Le Droit* in 1921 may have influenced the newspaper's decision to devote more attention to the General Topic Labour Relations. The work stoppage in *Le Droit*'s printing department began on June 1 and lasted until August 9. The newspaper limited its publication run during the strike and had other employees help out temporarily. The newspaper's striking employees, at first affiliated with an international union, organised under the banner of a Catholic union shortly after their unsuccessful work stoppage. Taillefer, *Le Droit et son histoire*, 22.

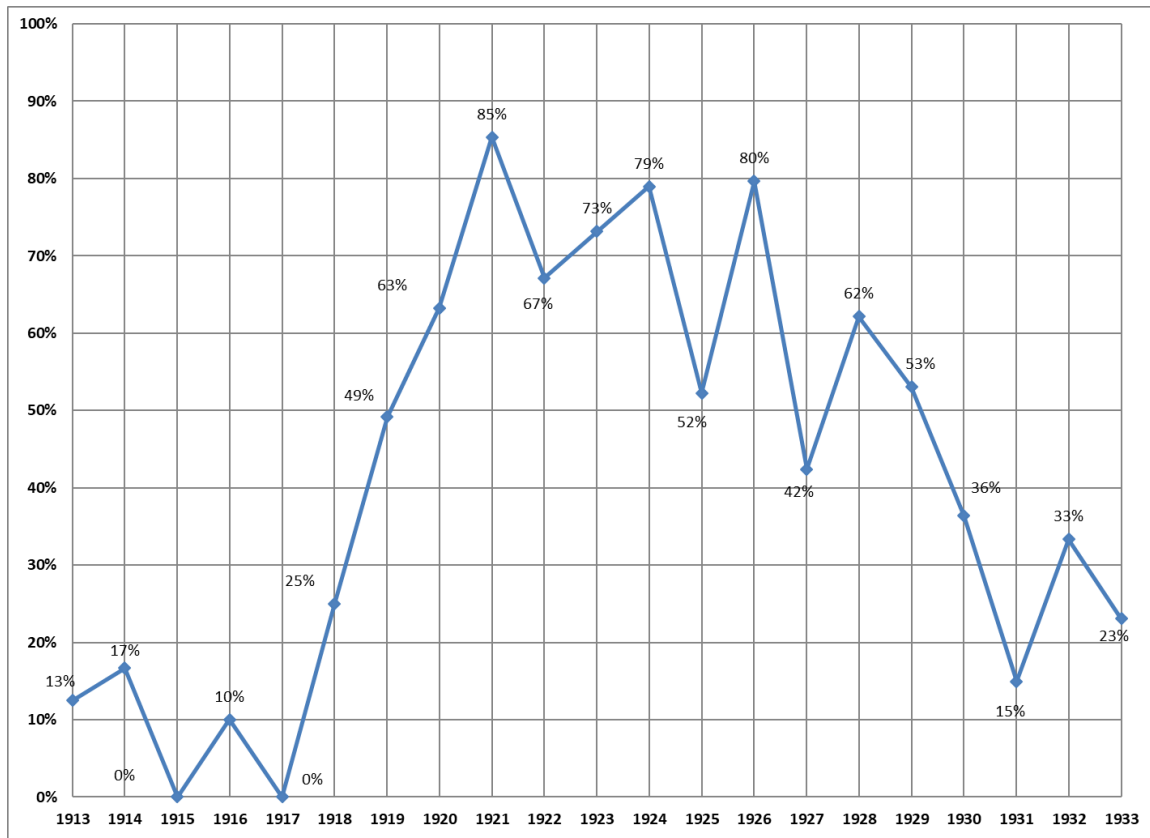
who contributed to the new editorial section.³ It has been argued that a few factors explain why labour movement-related themes were less prevalent in the editorial page destined for readers in Ontario than those in Quebec. Specifically, Jacques Gravel notes how “...l’euphorie qui entoure les années folles, les années ’20 et l’importance que prend le Règlement 17 dans tous les débats chez les Franco-ontariens donnent une place minuscule au syndicalisme chez les francophones de la province. Le fait qu’une grande partie des franco-ontariens soit des cultivateurs et que les problèmes industriels ne les confrontent avec une aussi grande acuité, peut aider à comprendre la place négligeable qu’occupe la situation ouvrière dans les différentes pages du *Droit*.”⁴ A closer examination of the distribution of material within the General Topic Labour Relations shows that exploring the rise of the labour movement and the aims of early trade unions were focal points from *Le Droit*’s appearance to October 1929. During this 15-year stretch, 89.6% of the content from the Subheading Organized Labour was about these themes.⁵ While beginning relatively modestly, it was the General Topic Labour Relations’ most important theme to 1928. It ranked first 12 out of 15 years. (See Appendix I: General Topic Labour Relations and its Subheadings per Year) Figure 26 shows that this subject represented just about half of the editorial content in this grouping in all but one instance from 1919 to 1929.

³ Henri Lessard who joined the editorial staff to produce content for Quebec readers penned 400 of the 906 editorials in the General Topic Labour Relations. Thomas Poulin (165) was the second most prolific editorialist followed by Charles Gautier (158), and J. Albert Foisy (56).

⁴ Gravel, “Quelques aspects de la vie des Franco-Ontariens”, 25.

⁵ As the organ was launched in late March, 1913, calculations are based upon rolling 12-month periods from that point. This proportion is significantly higher than the comparative share across both periods for the Subheading Immorality in Business and Class Issues (73.6% and 26.4%) and the Subheading Socialism & Communism (51% and 49%). See Appendix I: General Topic Labour Relations and its Subheadings per Year. Henri Lessard authored more than half of the 520 pieces focused on the labour movement, trade unions and labour actions. Lessard’s 258 opinion pieces are almost double Thomas Poulin’s 130 editorials and over four times more than the 70 Charles Gautier contributed.

Figure 26: Editorial content in the General Topic Labour Relations from the Subheading Organized Labour



The editorials in the Subheading Organized Labour focused on five core positions: workers have the right to unionize; the Catholic Church supports the working class and endorses organized labour; Catholic unions are most advantageous; neutral international unions are ineffective and promote social discord; and strike actions are justified in certain circumstances.⁶ Although the first two had the smallest share of editorial content, they encompass the principles that

⁶ The distribution of content about these five topics followed the pattern which saw two distinct periods, 1913 to late-1929 and late-1929 to early 1933—promotion of Catholic unions (89% vs. 11%), attacking international unions (94.6% vs. 5.4%), the Catholic Church's viewpoints (85.5% vs. 14.6%) and strike actions (96.2% vs. 22.3%). Content pertaining to the labour movement broke with the pattern (77.7% vs. 22.3%). See Appendix J: Distribution of Subheadings and Positions in the General Topic Labour Relations.

underscored the Subheading Organized Labour.⁷ The 72 pieces about the labour movement are essential to understanding why *Le Droit* repeatedly beseeched workers to join unions.⁸ Labour unions had made significant headway in Canada in the last quarter of the nineteenth-century as a result of the economy's conversion to industrial production.⁹ The launching in 1883 of an Ontario chapter of The Trades and Labour Congress of Canada cemented the fact that unions would be an important part of the province's industrial system.¹⁰ The Oblate-controlled daily consistently supported the labour movement throughout its first two decades. It argued, for instance, that workers should be allowed to band together to protect their interests so long as they did so in the spirit of charity and social justice.¹¹ Labourers, due to the perilousness of factory conditions and the power bosses wielded over the labour force, must join trade unions to receive fair compensation and adequate working conditions:

Les ouvriers n'ont pas seulement le droit de s'organiser,
mais c'est pour eux un devoir s'ils veulent surveiller pleinement
leurs intérêts et les faire justement respecter...Le droit et
le devoir sont corrélatifs c'est-à-dire que tout droit suppose
un devoir et tout devoir suppose un droit.¹²

A 1922 opinion piece about labour troubles at Hull's E.B. Eddy pulp and paper plant used this same line of argument. Labour organizations, readers were told, were indispensable in an age

⁷ While 72 editorials endorsed the labour movement and 55 explained the Catholic Church's stance on the labour movement issue, Catholic unions, international unions, and strikes were mentioned respectively in 245, 130 and 77 opinions pieces. Only arguments appearing in more than 40 editorials by Subheading were examined qualitatively.

⁸ These pieces include: *Le Droit*, Henri Lessard, "Que faire pour se protéger ?", 1/25/1923, 4; *Le Droit*, Charles Gautier, "À propos d'une grève", 6/2/1923, 3; *Le Droit*, Henri Lessard, "Le grand moyen", 2/9/1927, 4; *Le Droit*, Henri Lessard, "Du mécontentement", 9/23/1931, 4; and *Le Droit*, Camille L'Heureux, "Les méfaits de la politique", 7/18/1932, 3. All newspaper citations for the remainder of this chapter will refer to *Le Droit*.

⁹ See Eugene Forsey's *Trade Unions in Canada, 1812-1902* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982) for an overview of the early rise of the labour movement in Canada.

¹⁰ Jacques Rouillard, *Le Syndicalisme québécois : Deux siècles d'histoire* (Québec : Les Éditions du Boréal, 2004), 31.

¹¹ Thomas, Poulin, "Le devoir des patrons", 12/15/1919, 3.

¹² Ibid.

where machinery undermined skilled labour.¹³ Workers in these conditions must unionise to defend their worth in the industrial production process. A similar point of view appeared in a later editorial scolding workers who complained about poor employment practices but refused to join unions. This contradiction was absurd as the labourers “ont une arme absolument efficace pour se protéger et se défendre, on n’en a pas trouvé encore de meilleure : l’union, et cependant une multitude d’entre eux ne veulent pas s’en servir.”¹⁴ The same position was reiterated a few years later in a piece deriding industrialists for not paying heads of families adequately. In this case, it was noted that workers who had a family to support should be the first to back the collective bargaining practices central to organized labour:

...(ces) employés ont non seulement le droit, mais le devoir de se grouper et que partant c’est un peu leur faute si l’injustice commise à leur égard s’est maintenue jusqu’ici. Maintenant qu’ils ont décidé de s’unir, il n’y a pas de doutes que la situation va finir par s’améliorer grandement.¹⁵

The severe economic downturn sparked by the October 1929’s Stock Market Crash only redoubled *Le Droit*’s pro-labour campaign. The newspaper explained in “Plus nécessaire que jamais” that unions were critical in economic downturns since industrialists might be tempted to cut wages and revoke workplace rights to stem their financial losses. Some concessions under the dire circumstances were certainly warranted, but the working class should not be expected to bear the brunt of the downturn.¹⁶ The arguments presented during the Great Depression in support of unionization echoed the perspective *Le Droit* had taken since appearing on newsstands in 1913.

¹³ Fulgence Charpentier, “Une excursion au moulin Eddy”, 8/31/1922, 3.

¹⁴ Henri Lessard, “Toujours l’union”, 2/25/1924, 4.

¹⁵ Ibid., “Rien ne remplace l’union”, 7/28/1928, 4.

¹⁶ Henri Lessard, “Plus nécessaire que jamais”, 11/27/1931, 4.

Le Droit's campaign to convince readers of the merits of the labour movement did not rest solely on its claim that workers in the new industrial age needed protection from abuse. The newspaper also periodically relied on the Catholic Church's pro-union position to buttress its own pro-labour arguments.¹⁷ Thomas Poulin and J. Albert Foisy co-authored a thirteen-piece serial in late 1919 which highlighted how the Church had a long history of advocating for workers' rights.¹⁸ The former argued in the inaugural piece that people needed to know that the Catholic Church was intimately concerned about the plight of the labouring class. According to him, Church officials had always campaigned against owners who leveraged their control of the modes of production to exploit their workforce.¹⁹ The remainder of the pieces in this series explained that the Church had not only been a staunch defender of workers' rights but likewise supported their right to formally organise to defend their interests. Foisy delved into the latter by mentioning that Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* encyclical clearly sanctioned workers who banded together to defend their rights. *Rerum Novarum*, he believed, showed without a doubt that "...l'Église) approuve les justes revendications des ouvriers, elle encourage son clergé à assister les ouvriers catholiques à s'organiser entre eux."²⁰ He ended by stating that the Church's position was unequivocal:

En cette matière comme dans toutes les autres, l'Église
est pour la vérité et la justice. Si elle insiste sur les

¹⁷ These pieces include: Thomas Poulin, "L'Église et les ouvriers", 10/31/1919, 3; Henri Lessard, "Une anniversaire du syndicalisme catholique", 1/26/1923, 4; Henri Lessard, "Les syndicats qu'il faut", 8/18/1926, 4; Charles Michaud, "Définition du devoir", 8/31/1929, 3; and Henri Lessard, "Une autre de l'internationale", 1/28/1931, 4. *Le Droit* was certainly not alone in using this tactic as it was favoured by Quebec-based newspapers who supported Catholic doctrines. *Le Devoir*, for instance, used the same approach in calling for organizations to protect workers' rights. Anctil, *Fais ce que dois*, 23-24.

¹⁸ All of these editorials are titled "L'Église et les ouvriers".

¹⁹ Thomas Poulin, "L'Église et les ouvriers", 10/24/1919, 3. Editorialists at *L'Action catholique* also made the case that predatory capitalism was at the root of many of the social ills of an industrial and urbanized society. Jones, *L'Idéologie de l'Action catholiques*, 261. The Great Depression, this organ argued, was in fact the result of increasingly nefarious business practices. Fernand Dumont, "Les années 30 : la première Révolution tranquille" in *Idéologies au Canada Français : 1930-1940*, Fernand Dumont, Jean-Paul Montminy and Jean Hamelin, eds., (Québec : Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1978), 2.

²⁰ J. Albert Foisy, "L'Église et les ouvriers", 11/7/1919, 3.

devoirs des ouvriers, devoir réels et sérieux, si elle reconnaît et approuve les droits des patrons, droits sacrés et respectables, elle encourage de toutes ses forces les justes revendications des classes ouvrières et elle est toujours prêt à leur donner son plus entier concours.²¹

The subsequent nine editorials similarly drew from *Rerum Novarum* as well as other clerical documents to show the Church's unwavering support of workers' right to unionise in the face of bosses who failed to respect their value. The final editorial in the series asserted that Church leaders remained committed to the ideals laid out by Pope Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum*:

Léon XIII est disparu, mais il avait synthétisé toute la doctrine sociale catholique enseignée et pratiquée par l'Église depuis sa fondation. Ses successeurs Pie X et le glorieux pape régnant Benoît XV, répétèrent ces enseignement et ses encouragements...Aujourd'hui encore, comme certainement demain et jusqu'à la fin des temps, on voit l'Église catholique toute entière se dépenser sans compter pour protéger l'ouvrier dans l'obtention de sa vie matérielle, le bonheur relatif d'ici et de sa fin ultime, le seul vrai bonheur.²²

The next most important set of editorials in the Subheading Organized Labour tried to convince readers that, in joining the labour movement, their allegiance should reside with Catholic unions. The Church had created Catholic unions to ensure Christianity would remain a cornerstone of society and that the masses would continue to be committed to the traditional social order. The establishment of the Fédération ouvrière mutuelle du Nord in 1912 marked the official launch of the Catholic trade union movement in Ontario.²³ The founding of the Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du Canada (CTCC) in 1921 was another watershed mark in the spread of

²¹ Ibid.

²² Thomas Poulin, "L'Église et les ouvriers", 12/6/1919, 3.

²³ Gaffield, *Histoire de l'Outaouais*, 306. The Catholic Church recognised that unions would provide working-class people a lever to negotiate better wages and working conditions. However, it was quite fearful that neutral unions would erode Christianity's stabilizing influence on society. Rouillard, *Le Syndicalisme Québécois*, 48. The Church therefore launched Catholic unions as a means of ensuring that Christianity would retain its central place in the new industrial order. Roy, *Histoire des idéologies au Québec*, 67. For more on this topic, see Jacques Rouillard, *Le Syndicalisme québécois : Deux siècles d'histoire* (Québec : Les Éditions du Boréal, 2004) and the early sections of Andrée Levesque, *Virage à gauche interdit : Les communistes, les socialistes et leurs ennemis au Québec. 1929-1939* (Montréal : Boréal Express, 1984).

faith-based unionism in Canada. Nearly half of the 520 pieces in the Subheading Organized Labour was dedicated to showcasing why faith-based unions were a better choice than the dominant neutral international unions.²⁴ The capacity of the former to uphold social stability was the most frequent argument.²⁵ Cleric J.-M. Rodrigue Villeneuve explained in 1919, for instance, that a lesson should be learned from the class turmoil which plagued Germany over the past decade.²⁶ He contended that it would not be facing such instability if the social doctrine explained in Pope Pius X's *Singulari quadam* encyclical informed its labour movement. Villeneuve believed that the social contract at the heart of the Catholic doctrine on labour issues invariably sets the stage for labour officials to work out "...la question syndicale, et les moyens de la résoudre pour le plus grand bonheur de tous."²⁷ An editorial from the following year likewise mentioned the stabilising effect of the Catholic social doctrine. According to this piece, faith-based unions grounded in social Catholicism were making significant headway in Quebec because its leaders were not solely concerned with winning financial concessions from business leaders.²⁸ It noted that a recent convention of faith-based unions held in Chicoutimi hardly discussed how to extract financial returns for its members. Instead "...le congrès s'est préoccupé de graves questions sociales de la solution desquelles dépend le juste équilibre de la société."²⁹ This approach, the piece claimed, contrasted starkly with "...les tirades socialistes et révolutionnaires que l'on est accoutumé d'entendre dans les milieux ouvriers où manquent

²⁴ The 245 editorials include: J. Albert Foisy, "À propos de grèves", 9/27/1916, 1; Charles Gautier, "L'unionisme catholique", 9/22/1920, 3; Henri Lessard, "Le Cercle d'étude ouvrier", 2/13/1926, 4; and Henri Lessard, "L'assurance syndicale", 11/3/1928, 4.

²⁵ Sixty six opinion pieces mention specifically how Catholic unions promote social stability. Another set of editorials argue the converse for neutral international unions. Forty-one opinions pieces claim that these labour organisations are a disruptive force in society that can lead to social upheaval.

²⁶ J.-M. Rodrigue Villeneuve, "Les syndicats catholiques", 5/7/1919, 1.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Charles Gautier, "La nécessité sociale des unions ouvrières catholiques", 8/5/1920, 3.

²⁹ Ibid.

l'esprit religieux et le véritable sens social.”³⁰ It closed by reiterating that the best labour groups were those infused with the stabilising influence of Catholic social doctrine: “...(il est) inutile, donc, d’insister sur la nécessité de plus en plus grande de ces associations pour faire régner dans notre société la voix du bon sens et l’esprit catholique qui doit nous animer et que trop souvent l’on oublie par intérêt ou par passion.”³¹

A healthy amount of *Le Droit*’s editorial space to late 1929 was also dedicated to mentioning the measures that were helping spread faith-based unions. Just over one-third of the 61 editorials that focused on this topic remarked that educating people about the constructive purpose and stabilizing goals of Catholic unions was an easy way to ensure their continued growth.³² An editorial brought up this point shortly following the CCTC launch in 1921. “Le recrutement syndical” explained that the new movement would only grow if the public was fully aware of the benefits faith-based unions provided members and, most importantly, society at large.³³ The daily was convinced:

...qu’avec le temps, avec des efforts, le mouvement syndical catholique, qui prend d’immense proportions dans tout l’univers et qui suscite les plus belles espérances dans notre pays, dans notre province principalement, deviendra, devient déjà une des choses les plus intéressantes, les plus consolantes surtout, dans le monde souvent chaotique du capital et du travail.³⁴

Another editorial appeared four years later endorsing the CCTC’s strategy to better publicise its good work to drum up memberships. According to the newspaper, the plan to introduce a

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Twenty-two pieces argued that a public education campaign would provide the most benefits. Convincing business owners that they should only allow faith-based unions in their workplace appeared in 14 editorials.

³³ Henri Lessard, “Le recrutement syndical”, 11/10/1922, 4.

³⁴ Ibid.

“journée syndicale” as “...un nouveau moyen de formation et de propagande” would certainly meet with resounding success.³⁵ That same year, readers learned in *Le Droit* how this labour group was planning to launch “...un grand mouvement de propagande afin d’accroître leur effectifs” and that “...(c)’est sur l’éducation de la masse ouvrière, œuvre de très longue haleine, que le triomphe du syndicalisme catholique repose.”³⁶ A follow-up piece from a short time later explained that a one-day public information event in St-Hyacinthe was extended due to the overwhelming response.³⁷ Readers learned that several hundred workers joined their local Catholic union following this two-day event.

The newspaper’s campaign to push readers to join Catholic unions likewise relied on publishing content deriding neutral international unions. Forty-nine of these 130 editorials argued that Canadian unionists should distrust international unions because they were beholden to foreign priorities.³⁸ More specifically, readers were routinely told that the interests of United States’ workers were paramount because they represented much larger membership pools. According to *Le Droit*, U.S. union heads had veto rights over decisions taken by their Canadian counterparts.³⁹ This policy, it maintained, “veut dire qu’une organisation contenant des milliers et des milliers de membres marcheront, feront la grève, réclameront, bouleverseront les conditions sociales et économiques du Canada, à la dictée de chefs étrangers qui ont tout intérêt à empêcher notre pays de prospérer.”⁴⁰ An opinion piece about the spread of the One Big Union

³⁵ Henri Lessard, “Une journée syndicale”, 4/10/1926, 4.

³⁶ Henri Lessard, “Une propagande opportune”, 11/17/1926, 4.

³⁷ “En dehors de chez nous”. 11/18/1926, 4.

³⁸ This editorial content includes: Unsigned, “Le travail du dimanche”, 7/19/1914, 3; Thomas Poulin, “L’imprimerie”, 4/18/1921, 3; Henri Lessard, “Vers la nationalisation”, 1/23/1926, 4; Charles Michaud, “Les mouvements ouvriers”, 6/22/1927, 3; and Charles Gautier, “Le syndicalisme catholique”, 8/1/1930, 3.

³⁹ J. Albert Foisy, “D’où vient le danger”, 3/1/1920, 3.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

movement presented the same argument.⁴¹ According to the organ, it was not surprising that this campaign had gained momentum as Canadian workers were finally recognising that they should not expect “(à) toujours consentir à recevoir le mot d’ordre de l’étranger, à verser des contributions à l’étranger, à doter les organisations étrangères de toutes les améliorations qui leur sont refusées à eux-mêmes.”⁴² Canadian labour leaders at neutral international unions tried to address claims that they were powerless pawns who were part of large conglomerates directed by decision makers in the United States. The Ottawa-based daily laughed off the claims of the President of Canada’s Trades and Labour Congress that his operation had taken significant strides to gain its operating independence from the American Federation of Labour. This contention seemed laughable to *Le Droit* as everyone knew it remained very closely affiliated with the powerful U.S.-based giant:

Étant affilié avec elle, il entretient donc des relations et il y a des liens de dépendance quelconque entre lui et les unions américaine dont S. Gompers est le pontife suprême...D’ailleurs, il existe nombre de faits pour établir que les ouvriers canadiens appartenant à l’internationale n’ont pas le dernier mot à dire, même dans leurs affaires, et que lorsque des choses intéressant les travailleurs des deux pays les mettent aux prises, ce sont les plus forts, c’est la tête, c’est-à-dire ce sont les américains qui l’emportent et les canadiens qui sont sacrifiés.⁴³

A similar opinion piece in late 1928 noted that a growing number of workers were finally realising that international trade unions in Canada were subservient to the whims of their head offices in the United States. The defection of local tramway company workers from a large American-based international union to a Canadian labour organisation was, the organ explained,

⁴¹ The movement was led by western Canadian unionists who sought separation from the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (TLC) and the American Federation of Labor (AFL).

⁴² Thomas Poulin, “Le grand mal”, 3/6/1920, 4.

⁴³ Henri Lessard, “Entièrement libre ?”, 9/25/1924, 4.

hopefully part of an evolving trend “...que rien n’arrêtera sa marche jusqu’au jour où tous nos travailleurs organisés auront enfin rompu les liens qui les retiennent encore sous la tutelle de chefs ouvriers étrangers.”⁴⁴ The growing tendency in Canada towards homegrown labour groups, it was mentioned, was only natural for a nation taking incremental steps in several other areas to gain its autonomy from outside forces.⁴⁵ The organ offered a related perspective when it forecasted the eventual demise of international unions in Canada. It set the stage for this argument by noting that international unions, because they were losing favour to Catholic labour groups, had to resort to demanding “closed shops” to strong-arm workers to join them.⁴⁶ The piece closed by reiterating that international unions had no place in Canada:

On l’a souvent noté : le Canada est le seul pays du monde qui tolère qu’une masse de ses ouvriers unionistes relève d’une organisation exotique. Mais l’Internationale n’a qu’à continuer comme elle fait à l’endroit des unions indigènes pour fournir de plus en plus des arguments contre elle.⁴⁷

Le Droit also leveraged the assertions of Catholic officials in its campaign to promote faith-based unions. Thirty-eight pieces specifically mentioned how Catholic officials implored their flock to stick to the recently launched faith-based unions instead of the neutral international unions.⁴⁸ Charles Gautier authored an early editorial parroting the Church’s arguments to enrol in these new labour organizations.⁴⁹ His 1922 piece began by condemning a Quebec government official who had asserted that large international unions offered the best protection for labourers.

⁴⁴ Ibid., “Nationalisation”, 11/27/1928, 4.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Henri Lessard, “L’Internationale se condamne”, 4/23/1930, 4.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ These editorials include: Charles Gauthier, “L’unionisme catholique”, 9/22/1920, 3; Thomas Poulin, “Le mouvement ouvrier”, 5/16/1921, 3; Henri Lessard, “Groupements des syndicats”, 1/31/1922, 4; Charles Gautier, “Syndicalisme catholique et syndicalisme neutre”, 9/6/1922, 3; and Henri Lessard, “Emprise du syndicalisme catholique”, 4/24/1925, 4.

⁴⁹ The pro-Catholic union argument was also a mainstay in *L’Action catholique*’s editorial content. Jones, *L’Idéologie de l’Action catholiques*, 194.

According to the editorialist, the Minister of Public Works and Labour, Antonin Galipeault, “...n’est pas excusable d’ignorer la doctrine de l’Église sur ce point. S’il l’ignore, pourquoi ne se renseigne-t-il pas auprès des autorités ecclésiastiques ?”⁵⁰ Gautier then specifically referred to Pope Pius X’s *Singulari Quadam* encyclical which condemned inter-faith trade unions. He hoped Galipeault would heed the Pope’s closing statement:

Il faudrait réprouver hautement ceux qui poursuivraient de sentiments hostiles les associations purement catholiques, ---alors qu’au contraire on doit de toute manière aidée les associations de ce genre et les propager, ---ainsi que ceux qui voudraient établir et presque imposer le syndicat inter-confessionnel.⁵¹

“Qu’est-ce qu’un syndicat catholique ouvriers ?” from late 1924 relied on similar evidence. It mentioned how a cleric recently gave a speech at the Montreal Oratory explaining that the Church was unequivocal about the primacy of Catholic unions. The priest stated during his presentation that these unions, because they are rooted in the Catholic social doctrine of mutual responsibility, were best positioned to end the escalating acrimony between industrialists and the working class.⁵² *Le Droit* drew special attention to the fact that the cleric mentioned how Catholic unions, unlike neutral international unions who were prone to foment class warfare, were fundamentally committed to finding reasonable solutions to the mounting discord between the competing groups. Readers who want a peaceful society, the daily was convinced, had no choice but to support the stabilizing Catholic unions.

The newspaper continued to use the statements of clerics even after Catholic unions had become more common. For instance, a late 1920’s piece quoted a prelate’s declaration that

⁵⁰ Charles Gautier, “Un impair de M. Galipeault”, 8/24/1922, 3.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Henri Lessard, “Qu’est-ce qu’un syndicat catholique ouvrier ?”, 10/14/1924, 4.

workers got better results when negotiating with employers if they were represented by faith-based unions. It also included a snapshot of a report by Father Joseph Archambault about a recent Union catholique des cultivateurs de la province de Québec conference. The opinion piece most notably included the statement:

(c)ar se sont des unions vraiment catholiques, ainsi que les désirent les Papes, ainsi que Pie X l'exigeait expressément dans son encyclique *Singulari quadam*, ainsi que nos évêques l'ont demandé à leur tour ; ce sont de telles unions qui se créent dans nos milieux ouvriers et agricoles. Leurs membres sont des catholiques pratiquants, leur esprit est celui que prêche l'Église, et près d'eux, pour guider leurs pas, se tiennent constamment des prêtres choisis par leurs évêques.⁵³

The editorial noted that this assertion "...conforment une fois de plus l'assertion qui veut que les syndicats catholique d'ouvriers, aussi bien que les cercles de l'Union des cultivateurs sont dans la bonne voie, dans la meilleure voie, en fait d'association professionnelle."⁵⁴ *Le Droit* likewise printed an editorial in early 1930 showcasing parts of Archbishop of Ottawa Joseph-Guillaume-Laurent Forbes' pastoral letter instructing the province's prelates to safeguard the Church's role in regulating the relationship between bosses and workers. This piece explained that the cleric's missive, after re-iterating that the Church supported the labour movement, included the strongly-worded directive:

Non seulement on ne peut raisonnablement s'opposer à l'organisation des ouvriers après les directions de l'Église, mais n'est plus permis même de rester indifférent à cet égard. C'est un devoir pour Nous de seconder par tous les moyens en Notre pouvoir les succès du Mouvement Ouvrier Catholique (his emphasis).⁵⁵

⁵³ Henri Lessard, "De belles paroles sur l'union", 8/21/1928, 4.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Charles Gautier, "Problèmes ouvriers et agricoles", 1/8/1930, 3.

Readers were told that Archbishop Forbes' instructions clearly reinforced the fact that the Church believed faith-based unions were a bedrock of stable societies. *Le Droit* then beseeched them to act in the spirit of the message by embracing and supporting Catholic labour groups.⁵⁶

The Great Depression fuelled *Le Droit*'s pro-Catholic union campaign as it feared the economic collapse might provoke social instability. Of the 25 pieces published from November, 1929 to May, 1933, 14 contended that these labour groups were essential in difficult economic times as neutral unions were promoting solutions that would upend the traditional social order. "Pour les syndicats", printed in September, 1931, is a fitting example of this type of content. It mentioned that several municipal, provincial and federal political officials who spoke at the CCTC's annual congress in Quebec City lauded the steadying influence of faith-based unions in such difficult times. According to the newspaper, these declarations were a testament to the fact that the Catholic labour movement "...représente comme un facteur d'ordre et de progrès social, c'est probablement qu'en ces temps difficiles où la révolution gronde, où le communisme s'est infiltré dans tout le pays, l'on sent et constate la nécessité de revenir aux meilleurs principes pour échapper à un désastre possible."⁵⁷

Content about organised labour in *Le Droit* did not solely focus on touting the merits of the labour movement, the Catholic Church's view on unions, and the advantages of Catholic labour groups. It also included nearly 80 editorials about needing to resort to work stoppages to

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Henri Lessard, "Pour les syndicats", 9/2/1931, 4.

address poor working conditions.⁵⁸ Twenty-six of these editorials explained that strikes were justified when grievances were undeniable and that collective bargaining tactics had failed to bring about necessary changes.⁵⁹ The first editorial to touch upon this matter argued that unions were best to avoid work stoppages until discussions proved futile or if employers refused to negotiate.⁶⁰ *Le Droit* followed this early editorial with a ten-piece serial which asserted the same point. Victor Barrette, who authored the series which appeared in 1921, specifically stated that strike actions were justified:

...pour l'obtention d'un salaire proportionné, au coût actuel de la vie, au genre et la difficulté du travail, au nombre d'heures d'ouvrage, au sexe, à l'habileté ou à la science du travailleur, etc – salaire qui refuserait un employeur impitoyable sera légitime, aussi la grève entreprise pour l'amélioration physique du travail, des conditions hygiénique de l'atelier, ou la protection contre les accidents, etc -- si également refusées par le chef d'usine ; sera légitime, enfin la grève entreprise pour la sauvegarde morale des employés, surtout dans ces boutiques où hommes et femmes vivent dans une continuelle et dangereuse promiscuité.⁶¹

A related editorial from 1922 shared this viewpoint as it noted "...qu'une grève provient de l'attitude injuste, révoltante, des patrons qui, eux, demeurent cachés sous le voile peu transparent des gros faits relatés et mis sous les yeux de la foule."⁶² A later piece mentioned that a strike in Eastern Quebec was a prime example of how labourers were routinely forced to walk out on their work.⁶³ The labourers, it was mentioned, had had no alternative but "...d'en venir à un

⁵⁸ These opinion pieces include: Thomas Poulin, "La coopération industrielle", 7/13/1918, 3; Henri Lessard, "Pourquoi nationales ?", 2/28/1922, 4; Henri Lessard, "Documents en main", 8/12/1926, 4; and Henri Lessard, "Actes condamnable", 8/15/1931, 4.

⁵⁹ Aside from offering several editorials explaining the conditions that justified strike actions, the organ also printed several case studies of labour stoppages which it felt were entirely justifiable. The latter include: "La grève de Hull", 12/9/1918, 3; "Une lettre instructive", 7/20/1921, 3; "À propos d'une grève", 6/2/1923, 3; and "Une charte du travail", 8/9/1926, 4.

⁶⁰ J. Albert Foisy, "À propos des grèves", 9/27/1916, 3.

⁶¹ Victor Barrette, "La grève", 6/8/1921, 4.

⁶² Henri Lessard, "Le dessous des grèves", 9/26/1922, 4.

⁶³ Ibid., "Une bonne cause", 3/9/1929, 4.

moyen aussi extrême que la brusque cessation du travail pour faire triompher ce qu'ils considèrent être un droit."⁶⁴ According to *Le Droit*, the demands made by the striking workers "...n'avait rien d'exagéré et que les employeurs se seraient montrés, nous ne disons pas généreux, mais simplement justes, en l'accordant. Ou nous nous trompons fort, ou les grévistes défendent une cause foncièrement bonne."⁶⁵

General Topic Labour Relations—Subheading Immorality in Business & Class Issues

The underlying argument the newspaper used in favour of strike actions provides a glimpse into the perspectives advanced in the Subheading Immorality in Business & Class Issues, the second most important theme of the General Topic Labour Relations. It ranked first six times, second eleven times, and third four times. (See Appendix I: General Topic Labour Relations and its Subheadings per Year) Fifteen authors were responsible for the 247 editorials in this grouping.⁶⁶ As shown by Figure 27, the Subheading dominated the General Topic over *Le Droit*'s first few years until it settled near the 20% to 30% range to 1930 when it experienced a sudden bump with the beginning of the Great Depression.⁶⁷

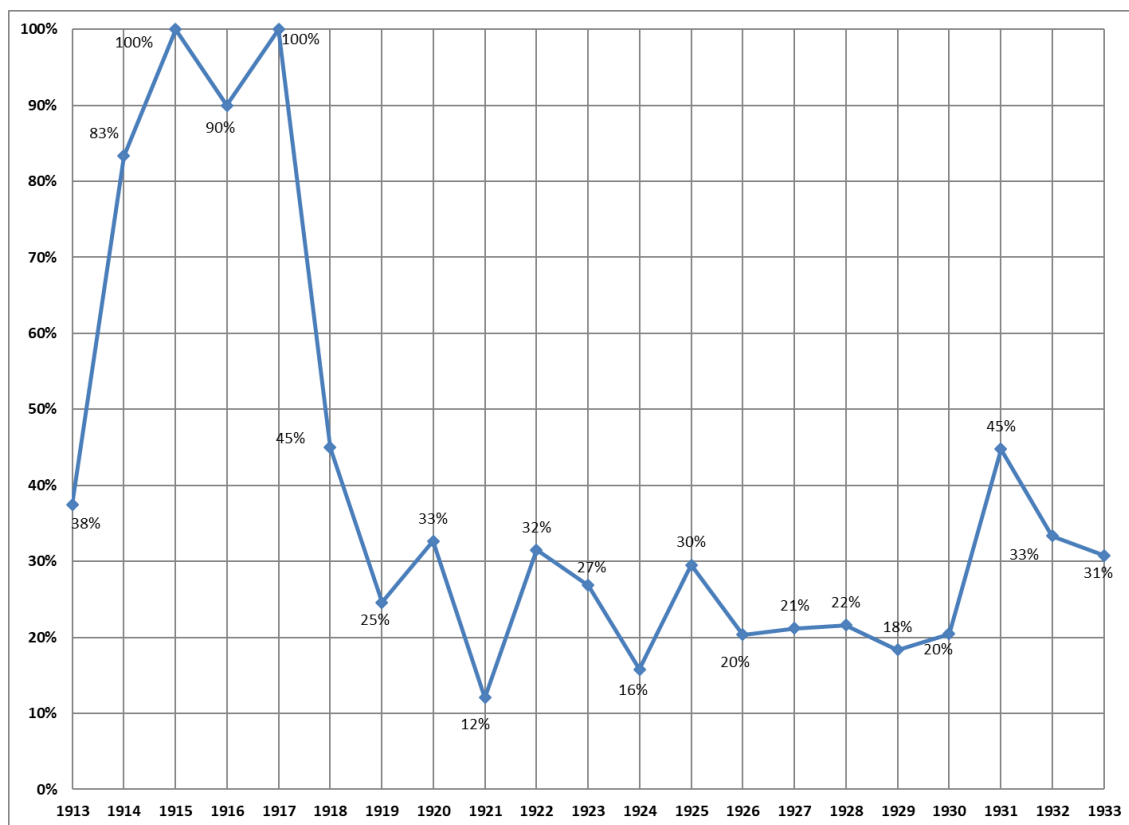
⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Henri Lessard, who was especially interested in the issue of the fair distribution of wealth, penned the most editorials (110), followed by Thomas Poulin (28), J. Albert Foisy (27), and Charles Gautier (26).

⁶⁷ A few notable events sparked *Le Droit* to briefly print more content on this matter. Firstly, it published several editorials about industrial practices during the First World War when the federal Meredith-Duff Royal Commission released its report on questionable wartime business conduct. Likewise, a parliamentary investigation in 1931 into how the Beauharnois Light, Heat and Power Company used its financial influence to get the government to institute policies for its benefit spurred the organ to print more editorial content about the actions of the business class.

Figure 27: Editorial content in the General Topic Labour Relations from the Subheading Immorality in Business & Class Issues



This content consistently argued out that capitalism in the new industrial age caused increasingly harmful outcomes. The Catholic Church had, it must be noted, taking exception with certain aspects of the capitalist system for some time.⁶⁸ Although not seeking to fundamentally change the system, many clerics believed that reforms were needed to alleviate industrial capitalism's most harmful consequences—wealth inequity, precarious employment, and chronic unemployment.⁶⁹ Over half of the editorial content in the Subheading Immorality in Business and Class Issues asserted that progressively cutthroat business practices were a detriment to the

⁶⁸ Roy, *Histoire des idéologies au Québec*, 67.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 63. The advent of the Great Depression ultimately led many to call into question the principles of laissez-faire capitalism. A significant segment of the population consequently sought a redefinition of the government's role in regulating the economy. Linteau, *Quebec since 1930*, 22. Le programme de restauration sociale offered by L'École sociale populaire layed out a detailed plan for fixing what was seen as a fundamental crisis affecting laissez-faire capitalism. Dumont, "Les années 30", 2.

public.⁷⁰ Seventy-eight of the 126 opinion pieces in this cluster mentioned that the increasingly uneven distribution of wealth had caused a distressing wealth disparity between the lower and upper classes.⁷¹ One of the earliest editorials asserted that businessmen who used any opportunity to trim their operating costs contributed significantly to this situation. Teenagers who left school to supplement the household income were an especially easy target for these unscrupulous bosses.⁷² These employers took advantage of their circumstances by offering “(des) salaires...bien minces, souvent trois ou quatre piastres par semaines et cela même quand ils ont travaillé avec zèle et fidélité pendant deux ou trois ans au même poste, mais ce salaire est impérieusement nécessaire souvent à l’existence de la famille.”⁷³ According to *Le Droit*, this cruel practice seemed irreversible since, in the current way of doing business, “...le fort opprime le faible, le riche exploite le pauvre, l’égoïsme règne en maître et l’on a n’oublié que les forts et les riches n’ont pas que des droits à faire valoir mais aussi des devoirs impérieux à remplir.”⁷⁴ A subsequent editorial similarly assailed bosses who failed to care that male heads of families were expected to support an entire household. He explained that providing a “family wage” to these men, aside from being a moral imperative, was a good business practice as well-paid workers were very loyal and especially hard working.⁷⁵ The newspaper used the context of the Ontario government’s mid-1920s investigation into low female wages to pressure Quebec officials to stop businessmen from underpaying women. An editorial pointed out that progress appeared to

⁷⁰ This material appeared regularly across the two decades. See Appendix J: Distribution of Subheadings and Positions in the General Topic Labour Relations. The daily also published 27 editorials criticising industrialists for undermining competition—e. trusts and monopolies. This content included a few pieces censuring the very high profits made by industrialists as well as how many businessmen unjustly used their wealth to influence political decisions to favour their business interests.

⁷¹ These editorials include: Unsigned, “La mort du marché”, 8/15/1913, 1; Thomas Poulin, “Les loyers”, 12/11/1918, 3; Henri Lessard, “Désavantage pour la ville”, 6/10/1922, 4; Henri Lessard, “À quoi s’en prendre”, 11/25/1926, 4; and Richard Léopold, “Les chemins de fer”, 1/27/1933, 3.

⁷² “Les Salaires et le Coût de la Vie”, 4/17/1916, 1.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Thomas Poulin, “Salaire suffisant”, 8/31/1921, 3.

be forthcoming in Ontario as authorities at Queen's Park enacted many of the legislative recommendations from the recent inquiry.⁷⁶ Quebec officials, the daily thought, also needed to implement policies to close the wage inequity as businessmen would certainly not act of their own accord:

Il y a lieu à se demander si semblable législation ne serait pas de mise dans notre province, où le salaire hebdomadaire des jeunes filles, travaillant dans certaines usines, surtout dans l'ouvrage à la pièce à la maison ; pourrait équivaloir à une véritable exploitation.⁷⁷

The economic downturn sparked by 1929's Stock Market Crash energized *Le Droit's* campaign against nefarious business practices.⁷⁸ It was noted, for instance, that many employers were slashing already terrible wages as the economy was struggling. Although many of these businessmen might argue that flagging profits justified the cuts, the organ was convinced that they were only doing so because workers would accept almost any terms to protect their jobs.⁷⁹ The daily questioned how these business owners could not recognise the exploitative nature of their tactics:

Qu'ils se mettent à la place de ceux-là qui la reçoivent et qu'ils raisonnent un peu, mais franchement, mais sincèrement. Ils ne tarderont pas à conclure qu'ils ne pourraient pas vivre, au sens élémentaire du mot, en nos temps, avec d'aussi maigres ressources. Or, les autres ont aussi bien qu'eux a un minimum de revenu pour subsister à peu près comme il convient.⁸⁰

The newspaper drew from the most recent Papal Encyclical in its efforts to denounce businessmen it believed were taking advantage of workers during the tough economic times. For

⁷⁶ Henri Lessard, "En Ontario", 1/15/1925, 4.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Thirteen of the 27 editorials castigating bosses for offering subpar wages mention that offering good wages was imperative in these poor economic conditions.

⁷⁹ Henri Lessard, "À propos des salaires", 3/8/1930, 4.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

example, “Une doctrine de salut” mentioned that Pope Pius XI’s *Quadragesimo Anno* rightly affirmed that fair wages should have a primacy of place in a just society. Although slight adjustments were needed during this downturn, “...les ouvriers ont le droit de recevoir un juste salaire en retour de leur travail ; il n’appartient pas à ceux qui les emploient de s’attribuer tous les bénéfices qui résultent de l’alliance du capital et du travail.”⁸¹ *Le Droit* eventually advocated for a legislated minimum wage as it became convinced that too many business owners would not provide good wages of their own volition. It explained in mid-1932 that those at the newspaper were inherently against the intrusion of the State in the market place. Yet, the way some businessmen had acted during the economic slump led it to believe that using the power of the State is the only way to stop the exploitation of workers.⁸² Instituting a government imposed provincial minimum wage was needed to protect vulnerable workers.⁸³ Asking the government to take action in this matter proved how *Le Droit* had little confidence that businessmen could be convinced to voluntarily end their unfair ways.

Aside from targeting entrepreneurs for not providing adequate wages, the organ likewise lamented the fact that greed in the business world forced many to live below the poverty line. Specifically, the daily’s editorial pages contained 48 pieces claiming that an excessive appetite for profits drove up the cost of basic necessities to the point where most citizens found it difficult to make ends meet. *Le Droit* began to focus on this issue as the cost of living jumped during First World War. Fifteen of the first 23 editorials of this type asserted that retailers were using wartime conditions to greedily raise the prices of their wares. The unsigned “Les vautours du commerce” printed six months after the beginning of hostilities in Europe contended, for

⁸¹ Charles Gautier, “Une doctrine de salut”, 1/12/1932, 3.

⁸² Henri Lessard, “Salaire minimum”, 7/26/1932, 4.

⁸³ Ibid.

instance, that speculative practices were the root cause of domestic inflation. It explained that businessmen had unduly increased the price of many items in anticipation that people might hoard goods in advance of a mandated rationing policy.⁸⁴ The piece closed by noting that, if this practice spread, “...le public a le droit de compter sur le gouvernement pour le protéger contre les monopoles et les bruits, contre les vautours rapaces qui se jettent sur lui.”⁸⁵ By 1916 the Oblate-controlled mouthpiece was calling on government officials to intervene in the matter. Readers were told that drastic steps were required to put a stop to exploitative practices since “(l)a vie de nos fils, les souffrances de la pauvreté doivent valoir plus que la soif des gros profits des spéculateurs.”⁸⁶ Government officials, the opinion piece argued, could not ask the public to do its part in the war effort while turning a blind eye to businessmen who lined their pockets at their expense.⁸⁷ An editorial that appeared a few years after the armistice contended that drastic price drops since 1919 only proved that business speculation during the war years had been rampant.⁸⁸ Prices for some items certainly had to increase while Canada was at war, but “on éleva sans raison le prix d’une foule d’articles qui auraient dû rester au prix normal.”⁸⁹

The daily similarly took landlords and essential service providers to task in both decades. Much of the content about the former maintained that landlords were exploiting tenants in the face of a shortage of rental units. *Le Droit* was especially disgusted by those who surprised their tenants with exorbitant rent increases, knowing full well that a limited supply of rentals left them little choice but to accept. It stated that this coercive practice was absurd:

⁸⁴ Unsigned, “Les vautours du commerce”, 8/12/1914, 1.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Unsigned, “La spéculation véreuse”, 3/30/1916, 1.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Charles Gautier, “La baisse des prix”, 10/1/1920, 3.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Personne ne leur dit de donner gratuitement l'habitation
ni d'en demander des prix au-dessous d'un profit
légitime. Mais ce qu'on peut leur suggérer, c'est de
se montrer raisonnable, charitable même, s'il se peut. Il
y en a, c'est peut-être l'exception, qui ne réclament aucune
augmentation cette année, parce qu'ils se trouvent déjà
bien payés. Cet exemple devrait être suivi partout.⁹⁰

A late 1920s piece was similarly critical of landlords who treated their lot "...comme une entreprise purement commerciale. Pour eux, il s'agit d'abord, en épargnant le plus possible en terrain et espace, d'obtenir le rendement le plus élevé en espèces sonnantes."⁹¹ Landlords who rented units to the working class, *Le Droit* believed, must understand that a moral imperative underscores this type of business venture:

La vraie manière de considérer le logement ouvrier, c'est de se placer au point de vue de la famille, de sa santé physique et morale. Le logement de l'ouvrier, c'est en effet le nid où le travaillant fondera son foyer. Sans excéder les ressources du futur père, il doit offrir le confort nécessaire à l'élévation d'une famille normale, saine et robuste.⁹²

Le Droit used the same arguments against essential service providers it felt were gouging the public. Tramway, rail service providers as well as hydroelectric companies were singled out in 13 pieces from the mid-1920s to 1933. According to these editorials, these service-providers used their monopoly to exploit their customers.⁹³ The daily noted that this practice was now widespread as "...la plupart des grandes compagnies s'inspirent des mêmes méthodes financières et d'affaires."⁹⁴ The rampant exploitation of the public, it was concerned, might spur the working class to adopt disruptive and dangerous ideologies. The only way to stop people from doing so

⁹⁰ Henri Lessard, "Les loyers chers", 3/7/1922, 4.

⁹¹ Camille L'Heureux, "Le logement ouvrier", 8/20/1928, 3.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ This argument appeared in the following: Henri Lessard, "Les taux de tramways", 4/5/1926, 4; Charles Michaud, "La lutte des cartels", 10/12/1929, 3; and Richard Léopold, "Pas de monopole !", 1/13/1932, 3.

⁹⁴ Henri Lessard, "Abus du capitalisme", 5/16/1933, 4.

“...(est) bien la mise en œuvre des réformes qui font disparaître les causes de mécontentement et de révolte, dont les abus du capitalisme sont la principale.”⁹⁵ *Le Droit* believed that only government intervention in the matter could put an end to these abusive practices and, as a consequence, hopefully stave off a grass roots movement seeking wholesale socio-economic upheaval.

Le Droit's editorial pages also included several dozen opinion pieces positing why many businessmen treated workers and the public unfairly.⁹⁶ The Catholic-sponsored belief that a social contract existed between socio-economic groups framed much of this content. In brief, the organ subscribed to the notion that society relied on a reciprocal system where people from different groups are mutually indebted to each other. This approach, according to the Catholic Church, encouraged fairness and equity which were foremost in a stable society.⁹⁷ When applied to the world of commerce and industry, businessmen were expected to provide products and services at reasonable prices reflecting fair market value. At the same time, a social contract existed between employees and employers where the former provided their labour in exchange for adequate wages in humane working conditions.⁹⁸ Many believed that the early twentieth-century's transformation to mainly urban industrial conditions eroded the social contract between employers and employees.⁹⁹ *Le Droit* published 59 pieces presenting this perspective.¹⁰⁰ “La

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ This material appeared regularly across the two decades. See Appendix J: Distribution of Subheadings and Positions in the General Topic Labour Relations.

⁹⁷ Linteau et al. (1983), 333.

⁹⁸ Jean Hamelin and Jean-Paul Montminy, “Québec 1896-1929 : une deuxième phase d'industrialisation” in *Idéologies au Canada Français : 1900-1929*, Fernand Dumont, Jean-Paul Montminy and Jean Hamelin, eds., (Québec : Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1974), 19.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ These opinion pieces include: Unsigned, “La question sociale”, 4/11/1913, 1; Rodrigue Villeneuve, O.M.I., “Benoit XV et la semaine sociale de Montréal”, 6/10/1920, 3; Henri Lessard, “Ouvriers et professionnels”, 9/30/1924, 4; and Henri Lessard, “Un minimum de bien-être”.11/25/1931, 4.

grève américaine” typified the organ’s position that a lack of mutual understanding and respect caused the broad sweeping work stoppage plaguing America’s rail industry. The general strike in the United States, the editorial argued, “...(est) encore ici un exemple frappant du manque de trait d’union entre les employés et les patrons, du manque de sympathie entre le capital et le travail.”¹⁰¹ So long as employees and employers refuse to coexist in the spirit of justice and charity, “...l’antagonisme entre le travail et le capital, entre les riches et les pauvres, se développera de plus en plus jusqu’à provoquer une révolution sanglante.”¹⁰² A later piece published at the end of the same decade similarly argued that national economic prosperity depended on the existence of goodwill between owners and workers. It contended that having both groups recognize the mutually beneficial terms of this reciprocal relationship was the only way Canada could avoid the labour strife that crippled other countries.¹⁰³ The editorial’s closing statement forecasted that, in the coming years, only those nations where the mutual contract ideal existed would prosper.¹⁰⁴ “Une part du devoir social” added to the chorus that individuals should not expect to live “comme s’il aï son unique maître, indépendant de tous, et il doit tenir compte des justes besoins de son prochain, y faire droit, lorsque sa (sic) est de son ressort.”¹⁰⁵ Recognising that everyone was to a degree responsible for the welfare of others encouraged fairness and a peaceful society. Workers should be reasonable in seeking good wages from their employers in return for their hard work, diligence, and loyalty. Employers, *Le Droit* maintained, should meet their salary demands since “...de leur donner, (ils) accomplissement d’une partie de leur devoir social.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ J. Albert Foisy, “La grève américaine”, 8/31/1916, 1.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Charles Gautier, “La guerre économique”, 7/21/1919, 3.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Henri Lessard, “Une part du devoir social”, 8/12/1924, 4.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

The Great Depression offered the daily a perfect pretext to repeat its claim that mutual responsibility between social classes underscored prosperous societies.¹⁰⁷ A case in point was a late 1930s piece which proclaimed that businessmen, by offering only bare minimum salaries, promoted wealth inequality which set the stage for the economic disruption. It then pleaded with business owners to resist the temptation to reduce wages and/or lay off staff in these tough economic times. These tactics might help them survive the economic downturn, yet they would make matters worse for everyone.¹⁰⁸ The organ wondered derisively:

Est-il admissible dans ces circonstances que des hommes embauchent d'autres hommes, et les fassent travailler à des salaires qui ne peuvent pas convenir aux frais de leur entretien personnel et de subvention de leurs familles ? Est-il possible qu'un homme exploite son semblable et profite de son dénouement ?¹⁰⁹

A subsequent editorial painted a dire picture of the fate of society if the reciprocal relationship between employers and employees was not re-established. It asserted that the increasing mistrust between these groups could only lead to a complete social upheaval and reordering of the balance of power in society.¹¹⁰ According to *Le Droit*, "(l)e monde se trouve en face de deux tendances également dangereuses : tendance à la dictature économique et tendance au socialisme."¹¹¹ It was hoped that the Great Depression might compel the working class and the business class to realize that they needed to re-establish a productive working relationship based upon collaboration and mutual respect. Failing to do so, the daily intimated, would have grave consequences for everyone.

¹⁰⁷ The newspaper published 10 editorials after the October Stock Market Crash arguing that the economic downturn was partly due to the erosion of the social contract.

¹⁰⁸ Léopold Richer, "Crise et petits salaires", 10/7/1930, 3.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Léopold Richer, "Deux tendances du monde économique", 7/22/1933, 3.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

General Topic Labour Relations—Subheading Socialism & Communism

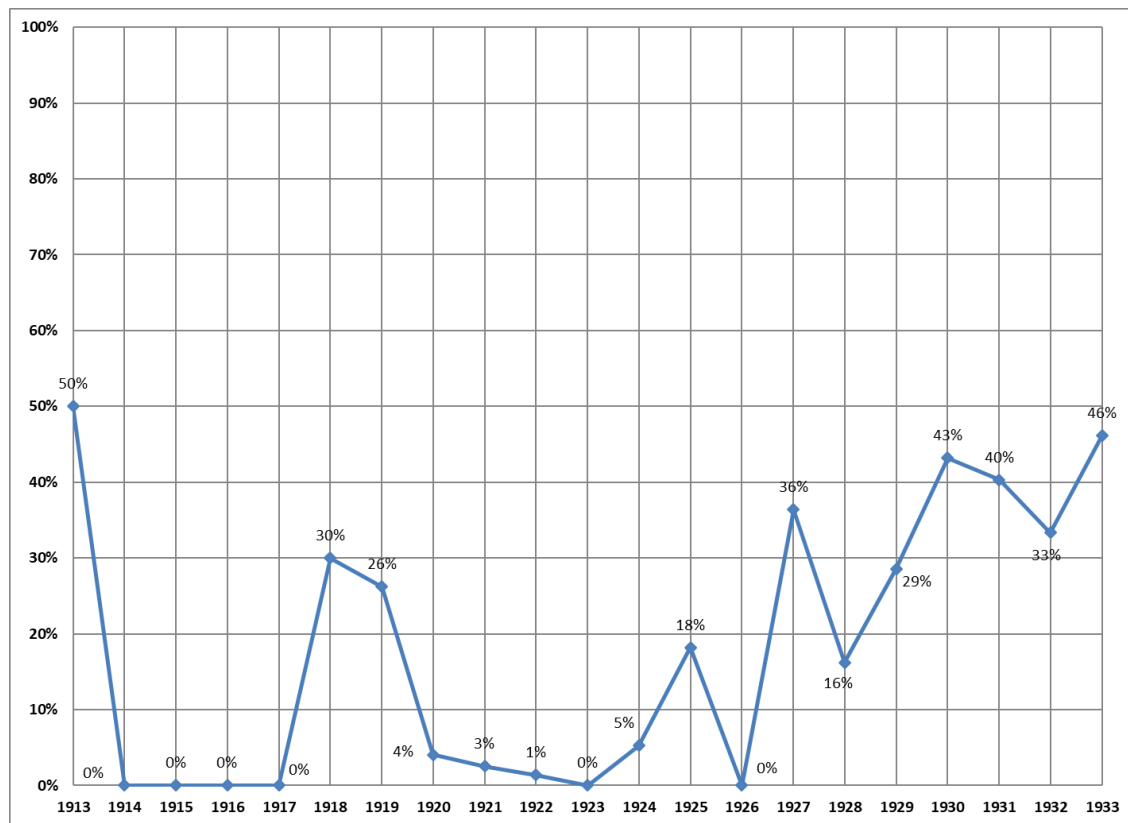
The closing section of the Subheading Immorality in Business & Class Issues offers a glimpse into the fact that the newspaper feared the growing discord between employers and employees might spark a revolt. *Le Droit* was alarmed that a worker-led revolution would not only seek to solve the unfair economic system but might upend the social order. The Oblate-controlled newspaper published 143 editorials about this theme from 1913 to 1933.¹¹² It was the third-most important subject of the General Topic Labour Relations. It ranked first overall four times, captured the second ranking seven times, and was in third place in the remaining ten instances.¹¹³ (See Appendix I: General Topic Labour Relation and its Subheadings per Year) As shown in Figure 28, this subheading gained prominence at the end of the 1910s and again in the late 1920s/early 1930s. The Russian Revolution of 1917 which ushered in a communist government and the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike were responsible for the former. These events prompted the organ to increase its editorial content about the dangers of socialism and communism. *Le Droit* reacted the same way in the late 1920s out of fear that the severe economic slump might be the tipping point for a worker-led uprising in Canada.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Unlike the two other subheadings, this content was not evenly distributed across both decades. While 73 opinion pieces were printed to late 1929, almost an equal number appeared in the four years to 1933. See Appendix J: Distribution of Subheadings and Positions in the General Topic Labour Relations. This editorial material includes: Unsigned, “Un rêve socialiste”, 4/22/1913, 1; Charles Gautier, “Un nouvel ordre social”, 6/8/1918; Thomas Poulin, “Les pertes Russes”, 7/25/1921, 3; Henri Lessard, “Propagande à surveiller”, 2/27/1925, 4; and Charles Gautier, “Un régime d’esclavage”, 3/24/1931, 3.

¹¹³ Nine editorialists contributed to this content with Charles Gautier, author of 61 opinion pieces, leading the way. Henri Lessard who penned 32 editorials was the second most prolific contributor followed by Léopold Richer who provided a dozen opinions pieces.

¹¹⁴ The Subheading Socialism & Communism ranked first or second in the first five years of the Great Depression. *L’Action catholique* and *Le Devoir* met the crisis in similar fashion. While the former argued that socialism and communism would lead to a full-scale revolution and anarchy, the latter recoiled against ideals that threatened Quebec’s traditional social order where the Catholic Church had special privileges and prestige. Jones, *L’Idéologie de l’Action catholiques*, 208-209 and Anctil, *Fais ce que dois*, 40-41.

Figure 28: Editorial content in the General Topic Labour Relations from the Subheading Socialism & Communism



It is not surprising that the Oblate-controlled daily virulently opposed socialism and communism as the Catholic Church had been condemning these ideologies for nearly 75 years. Pope Pius IX (1846-1878), Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), Pope Pius X (1903-1914), Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922), and Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) each contributed to a corpus of encyclicals and apostolic letters arguing that socialism and communism challenge Catholic teachings and would upend the traditional social order.¹¹⁵ Seventy-eight of the pieces in the Subheading Socialism & Communism mentioned that these ideologies, although promising to improve working class

¹¹⁵ Levesque, *Virage à gauche interdit*, 122. Pope Pius XI's 1931 *Quadragesimo Anno* encyclical, for instance, ultimately promoted a corporatist social doctrine to block the rise of socialism and communism. Linteau et al., *Quebec: A History*, 62-63.

conditions¹¹⁶, led to destructive outcomes.¹¹⁷ For instance, readers were informed that the assassination of the Russian Tsar and his family “...est le couronnement naturel de l’œuvre révolutionnaire de l’élément bolsheviki”, while a year under Bolshevik rule since the revolution “...a eu vite fait de détruire l’œuvre de trois siècles : les révolutionnaires peuvent être fiers de leur œuvre !”¹¹⁸ The Winnipeg General Strike at the end of the decade prompted *Le Droit* to repeatedly warn readers that Canada was not immune to the spread of these damaging ideologies. For example, a June 1919 piece mentioned:

Depuis plus d’un mois la ville de Winnipeg est aux prises avec le bolchevisme, elle a contaminé d’autres villes et, aujourd’hui, jusqu’au Pacifique, les germes de révolution éclosent, paralysant le commerce et l’industrie, détruisant la liberté individuelle et menaçant l’avenir du Canada.¹¹⁹

Canadians, the newspaper believed, need to be vigilant as communist sympathisers were well-entrenched throughout the country.¹²⁰ Readers were told that international unions and the One Big Union movement were working to convince disgruntled Canadian employees that communist dogma could solve their workplace disputes.¹²¹ They also learned that a speaker at a recent Montreal conference confirmed that close to twenty well-run organisations “...plus ou

¹¹⁶ Eighteen editorials focused on unmasking the utopian promises made by socialist and communist sympathisers. They include: Unsigned, “Un rêve socialiste”, 4/22/1913, 1; Charles Gautier, “La vague révolutionnaire”, 9/13/1920, 3; Charles Gautier, “Paradis ou enfer ?”, 11/27/1930, 3; and Henri Lessard, “Réfutation communiste”, 4/22/1931, 4.

¹¹⁷ Thirty-five pieces highlighted how socialist and communist countries had strict limits on personal freedoms while the imprisonment and killing of political enemies were common. These editorials include: Charles Gautier, “Le Bolchevisme”, 12/26/1918, 3; Charles Gautier, “La faillite du Bolchevisme”, 9/10/1921, 3; Charles Michaud, “L’enfers des enfants”, 1/3/1929, 3; and Charles Gautier, “Communisme et capitalisme”, 4/13/1932, 3.

¹¹⁸ Charles Gautier, “Autour de Nicolas II”, 7/26/1918, 1.

¹¹⁹ J. Albert Foisy, “Les faits témoignent”, 6/19/1919, 1.

¹²⁰ The Communist Party of Canada joined with the Workers’ Party of Canada in the early 1920s. Rouillard, *Le Syndicalisme Québécois*, 73. At about the same time Ontario saw the launch of the Ontario Communist Party which rebranded in 1931 as the Canadian Labour Defense League. Hamelin and Gagnon, *Histoire du catholicisme Québécois*, 373. *The Worker* and *L’Ouvrier Canadien* were important organs who attempted to spread the movement. Ibid, 374.

¹²¹ Henri Lessard, “Le danger existe-t-il chez nous ?”, 1/5/1925, 4.

moins fortes travaillent à répandre au Canada les idées communistes.”¹²² He was convinced that Canadians, in the face of this tangible threat, “...(doivent) se tenir en éveil et favoriser de plus en plus, par tous les moyens possibles, les mouvements doctrinaux et les œuvres capables, de nous prémunir, de nous sauver des désastres.”¹²³ The case was made in a later editorial that those who were entranced by seemingly attractive socialist and communist ideals needed to realize that adopting these ideologies led to very dire consequences. For instance, “Le paradis bolcheviste” pointed out how Russia suffered greatly in the first ten years under Bolshevik-led soviet rule. The unbelievable human and material costs of this communist regime, *Le Droit* asserted, were natural consequences of how it enslaved people as part of its march to worldwide dominance.¹²⁴

The advent of the Great Depression saw the newspaper re-double its campaign against socialism and communism.¹²⁵ An editorial mentioned, for instance, that communists funded by the Soviet government had taken advantage of rising social tensions to step up their destabilizing campaigns in France and England.¹²⁶ It then asserted that the same seemed to be happening in Canada as communists had infiltrated public protests seeking solutions to the economic slump:

Notre pays souffre lui-même, et de plus en plus, de l’agitation des révolutionnaires. Hier, c’était à Winnipeg, à Toronto et à Port Arthur. Aujourd’hui le mal s’étend ou se révèle : à Sudbury, à Hamilton et à Montréal, la police est obligée de disperser des assemblées communistes... Les victimes du chômage ont le droit d’être entendues, écoutées, secourues,

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ 3/20/1928, 3.

¹²⁵ Twenty-three of the 71 editorials in the Subheading Socialism & Communism specifically mentioned that the economic downturn might convince more Canadians to adopt these ideologies. The newspaper placed a lot more focus on stopping these ideologies after 1929’s Stock Market Crash. Nearly 56% of the content about stopping socialism and communism appeared afterwards. See Appendix J: Distribution of Subheadings and Positions in the General Topic Labour Relations. Twenty-three of the 71 editorials in the Subheading Socialism & Communism specifically mentioned that the economic downturn might convince more Canadians to adopt these ideologies.

¹²⁶ Charles Gautier, “Contre la révolution”, 11/12/1930, 3.

traitées toujours avec une chrétienne sympathie.
Les autres, les colporteurs de faux dogmes, les
ardents propagandistes d'idées révolutionnaires, les
fauteurs de désordre doivent être écartés et mis dans
l'impossibilité de nuire.¹²⁷

Victor Barrette's "À la recherche du vrai remède" likewise told readers that the communists were taking advantage of the chronic unemployment to spread their propaganda. Although "make work" projects were certainly part of the solution to quell the increasing social discord, forceful measures were required to stop the communists from assailing society's rightful leaders and institutions. According to him, "(c)'est à la tête qu'il (faut) frapper, pour le guérir, la délivrer de l'emprise rouge. Et pour cela, ne laisser jamais libre cours aux appels à la haine contre les capitalistes, les bourgeois, les gouvernants, mots, qui dépouillés du sens odieux que leur attribue la langue révolutionnaire, signifient, au fond, l'autorité."¹²⁸

The second half of the editorial content in the Subheading Socialism & Communism focused on appropriate measures to stop the spread of these dangerous ideologies in Canada. Readers were repeatedly told that concerted and sustained approaches were essential.¹²⁹ As mentioned briefly above, the organ's early efforts rested on warning Canadians of the dangers of these ideologies. Remaining committed to Catholic ideals and joining Catholic unions were positioned early on as crucial to this effort.¹³⁰ However, an increasing share of content focused

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Victor Barrette, "À la recherche du vrai remède", 3/9/1932, 3.

¹²⁹ Thirty-eight editorials asserted that various organisations and dissemination channels were spreading socialism and communisms including international unions, the Freemasonry fraternal order, newspapers, and private schools. These pieces include: Charles Gautier, "Un nouvel ordre social", 6/8/1918, 3; Henri Lessard, "Contre le communisme", 7/14/1925, 4; Charles Gautier, "Un terrible fleau", 10/18/1929, 3; and Henri Lessard, "Propagande subversive", 3/31/1933, 4.

¹³⁰ Ontarians followed the example set in Quebec in this matter. The Comité des œuvres Catholique de Montréal and L'École sociale populaire were particularly important messengers in the campaign to stop socialism and communism. Hamelin and Gagnon, *Histoire du catholicisme Québécois*, 377 and Roy, *Histoire des idéologies au Québec*, 84.

on the role government needed to play in stopping the spread of socialism and communism.¹³¹ *Le Droit* called upon the State to clamp down on neutral international unions, the Communist Party of Canada, and to restrict the promotion of socialism and communism at public events. Its positions were inspired by the Papal Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* which made the case for greater State intervention in matters related to social security and the economy.¹³² *L'Action catholique* sought the same types of repressive measures in the 1930s to deal with the escalating communist threat.¹³³ The first editorials asking the government to take forceful action appeared in 1927. It mentioned that government officials in France had rightly implement strong measures to stop unions from circulating communist propaganda. The French government, *Le Droit* believed, justly recognised “(Qu’)il (lui) appartenait de protéger la société contre les fauteurs de désordre.”¹³⁴ Although the piece mentioned that socialism and communism had not yet infiltrated Canadian society to the extent seen in Europe, neutral international labour groups and a few teaching institutions were busy spreading these ideals at home. The daily wondered whether the federal government should put an end to these practices before the damage was done:

Le gouvernement ne semble pas s'inquiéter de ces symptômes. Au contraire, à la dernière session, il a retranché du code criminel certaines pénalités qui s'appliquaient à ceux qui étaient coupable de propagande révolutionnaire. Attendra-t-il pour agir que la situation empire et qu'elle soit devenue aussi alarmante qu'en Angleterre et qu'en France ?¹³⁵

¹³¹ Over two-thirds of the 88 editorials calling on measures to halt the spread of these principles maintained that the government needed to take a leading role in this campaign. See Appendix J: Distribution of Subheadings and Positions in the General Topic Labour Relations. This opinion pieces include: Charles Gautier, “Un nouvel ordre social”, 6/8/1918, 1; Charles Gautier, “La faillite du bolchevisme”, 9/10/1921, 3; Charles Gautier, “Épidémie de suicide”, 11/27/1928, 3; and Charles Gautier, “Le communisme an Angleterre”. 11/16/1932, 3.

¹³² Hamelin and Gagnon, *Histoire du catholicisme québécois*, 434.

¹³³ Jones, *L'idéologie de l'Action catholiques*, 225.

¹³⁴ Charles Gautier, “Le progrès du communisme”, 5/17/1927, 3.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

By 1929 the newspaper was convinced that repressive government action was needed. A late summer editorial opened by applauding Toronto's municipal authorities for recently forbidding communist groups from holding rallies in public parks.¹³⁶ City bylaws, it argued, were certainly useful on a local level but Canadians could not count on every municipality to follow suit. The federal government should therefore initiate broad-sweeping national measures to stamp out the socialist and communist wave. The piece ended by stating that "(s)eul le gouvernement fédérale peut mener une campagne générale contre les communistes et en débarrasser le pays." followed by asking "Se décidera-t-il ?"¹³⁷

Calls for government intervention to block socialism and communism only increased during the Great Depression.¹³⁸ It was mentioned in late 1930, for example, that socialists and communists had gained significant ground in the United States in the two years since the economy took a turn for the worse.¹³⁹ In fact, a U.S. government-sponsored study into the matter estimated that approximately 500 000 communist's called America home. The organ was pleased that Canada's federal Minister of Labour had asked for increased cooperation between employers and employees to ensure communism would not spread as virulently here.¹⁴⁰ But it was noted that the government must do more to protect the nation than just make public pronouncements. Communism could only be stopped by "...une action de surveillance et de répression opportune...de la part des gouvernements. Sans doute les patrons et les ouvriers peuvent beaucoup (sic) pour contrer les effets de la mauvaise doctrine, mais les pouvoirs publics

¹³⁶ Charles Gautier, "Le progrès du communisme", 8/16/1929, 3.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Forty-nine of the 59 opinion pieces calling for government action to stop socialism and communism appeared after the stock market crash of 1929. Fifteen of the former specifically mentioned the spiralling economic conditions when calling for government intervention.

¹³⁹ Henri Lessard, "Contre le communisme", 12/23/1930, 4.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

ont également leur rôle à jouer.”¹⁴¹ This powerful argument reappeared in a 1931 piece that exclaimed that the time had come for authorities to resort to forceful actions to undermine the increasing communist threat.¹⁴² Although many of the movement’s leaders had recently been arrested, more needed to be done to shutter teaching institutions which aimed to indoctrinate new recruits. The same approach was needed to close newspapers that delivered the communist message to the masses. According to *Le Droit*, outlawing them was the only way “...(de) s’attaquer à la source du mal, d’où il découlera sans cesse, quoique l’on fasse par ailleurs pour le combattre et le faire disparaître.”¹⁴³ The organ noted the following year that Ontario’s Minister of Justice rightfully upheld the conviction of a group of communists for sedition under article 98 of the criminal code of Ontario.¹⁴⁴ This decision, it was believed, finally made the Communist Party of Canada illegal in the province. Other provincial governments should use similar legislation to further stamp out communism:

Notre pays possède donc une arme efficace contre ceux qui prêchent la révolution...Jusqu’ici le gouvernement fédéral et plusieurs gouvernements provinciaux se sont montrés fermes dans la répression du communisme. Il est à espérer qu’ils continueront dans cette voie et qu’ils ne relâcheront pas leurs surveillance.¹⁴⁵

This closing statement exemplifies how far *Le Droit* believed government authorities should go to eradicate socialism and communism.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Henri Lessard, “Le fléau communiste”, 3/19/1932, 4.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Charles Gautier, “Pour la protection de l’ordre social”, 6/22/1933, 3.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

Conclusion

The material showcased in this chapter deviates from the content in the General Topics Values & Ideals, Family, Education, and Economy & Business. The views expressed in the over 900 editorials from the General Topic Labour Relations were never linked to *Le Droit*'s key aim, stopping the implementation of Regulation 17 and promoting the survival of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority. Instead, readers were presented numerous positions that were predictable in a newspaper equally committed to promoting the ideals of the Catholic Church. As was shown, many of the editorial campaigns in the Subheading Organized Labour, Immorality in Business, and Socialism & Communism also found a home in *L'Action catholique* and *Le Devoir*. These two Quebec-based organs were likewise committed to spreading social Catholicism and protecting the exalted place of the Church in society.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has focused on *Le Droit* from 1913 to 1933, delving into how the campaign against Regulation 17 and securing Franco-Ontarian rights were central to its raison d'être. It also examined how the daily promoted social Catholicism on behalf of the Oblates who controlled its content. Most significantly, this exploration offered insight into the mindset and character of those who led the province's minority. A twofold content analysis ensured the subject matter was investigated both broadly and deeply: While the statistical analysis of the over 10,000 pieces of coded editorials from the daily's launch to early 1933 pinpointed publication trends and patterns, the qualitative review provided an in-depth look at the positions that *Le Droit* took, as well as its overall editorial line of attack. Exploring archival records about the newspaper's administration uncovered factors that influenced its operations and editorial policies. For instance, it demonstrated that in its initial two decades, the daily underwent a series of transformations in approach, focus, practice, and style. Internal and external factors were the catalysts for changing the organ. They were also responsible for how those behind *Le Droit* reacted and the solutions they adopted. Their flexibility, pragmatism, and openness to accept changing conditions, instead of doggedly following traditional ideals and rejecting twentieth-century realities, guided *Le Droit*'s operations in these initial decades. A willingness to adapt their way of doing things was instrumental to defeating Regulation 17 and would pay significant dividends in the ongoing struggle to protect the Franco-Ontarian minority.

Changes related to Regulation 17 and protecting minority rights

At its launch *Le Droit* aspired to be a *journal de combat* to motivate Ontario's French-speaking population to stand up for its minority language rights. The pre-launch prospectus and inaugural edition argued that Regulation 17 was a significant step in a plan to assimilate the group into the province's English-speaking Protestant mainstream. *Le Droit* certainly stayed true to this mission by repeatedly publishing editorials to stop the implementation of this policy. It also printed numerous pieces about how the minority needed to protect itself from assimilationist threats. Yet, my research showed how these core issues received less and less attention as time went on. Specifically, Chapter One stated that *Le Droit*'s yearly anniversary edition opinion pieces and special editorials about its core aims decreasingly made the case that it was a battle organ dedicated to fighting Regulation 17 and protecting minority rights in Ontario. Most interestingly, fighting Regulation 17 was absent from either type of content after 1918, even though it remained on the table until 1927. My statistical analysis likewise showed that defeating Regulation 17 and safeguarding minority language rights were mentioned less and less frequently in *Le Droit*'s editorial pages after its initial years. By the end of the 1910s, other topics featured much more prominently. At the end of the next decade, the General Topics Politics and Public Policies actually overtook the General Topic Religion & Language. By 1933, the latter represented less than one-fifth of the organ's editorial content. The loss of importance of material about Regulation 17 and the defense of Franco-Ontarian rights was a stunning change in such short order.

Focusing less and less on stopping Regulation 17 occurred at the same time as the newspaper abandoned its original intention of catering exclusively to Franco-Ontarians. The pre-

launch prospectus and inaugural edition mentioned that the Syndicat d'oeuvres sociales limitée was tasked with publishing an organ as part of an Ontario-based movement to stop the push to assimilate the Franco-Ontarian minority. *Le Droit* was expected to be an Ontario-centric organ focused on mobilizing the province's French-speaking Catholic population to protect itself. Despite this, *Le Droit* moved away from this approach in the early 1920s by significantly increasing the amount of content it published about Quebec or that was of interest to its residents. Although the newspaper had always reported on matters from *la belle province*, this material never had a priority in its pages. This all changed when *Le Droit* introduced a "Nouvelles de Hull" section at the front of the newspaper for those on the north shore of the Ottawa River. Soon after, in 1922, the daily hired an editorial writer to produce content explicitly for this non-Ontarian audience. That content appeared on page four, separate from the pieces for Franco-Ontarian readers. The push to attract customers from the Outaouais region led the Syndicat to open a branch office in Hull where it produced more and more material that would resonate with Quebec audiences. The newspaper trumpeted these moves in anniversary and special edition pieces. This material similarly mentioned that the organ should be embraced by those in Quebec as it sought to cater to their needs.

The pre-launch missive and inaugural edition also noted that *Le Droit*, as part of its campaign to protect minority rights, would avoid associating with political parties or having links with politicians. According to these documents, being politically impartial would provide the requisite tactical latitude the daily needed to advocate for Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority. More specifically, refusing to accept financial support from any party and declining to interfere in the electoral process would shield *Le Droit* from accusations of political bias when it

attacked a party for seemingly threatening the minority. However, Chapter One revealed that the organ downplayed its original statement about the importance of remaining politically aloof and independent from any party. The matter was mentioned in only four of 10 anniversary editions and it appeared in just two of eight anniversary edition editorials after 1915. Such a glaring omission coincided with the fact that, in reality, the newspaper often had close ties with politicians and parties, and from the mid-1910s to the early 1930s it repeatedly interfered in elections. Proof of this was uncovered in archival content which revealed a clear pattern of constant intrusion in provincial and federal politics. *Le Droit*'s conduct even raised the ire of several of its readers who complained that it was obviously biased.

Le Droit's evolution in these two decades was also influenced by the fact that many of the Franco-Ontarian community's leaders took a new approach to protecting minority rights. The late 1910s saw them adopt a much more diplomatic strategy to convince political authorities to withdraw Regulation 17. The "bonne entente" approach became increasingly popular although some continued to believe that a hard-line, adversarial stance was necessary. *Le Droit* had made subtle reference to this "soft strategy" in its inaugural edition when it mentioned that it would endeavour to avoid making enemies as it campaigned to block the offensive policy. Even though it only touched upon this "measured approach" in 1914, 1915 and 1923 anniversary editions, an analysis of *Le Droit*'s editorial content showed that it embraced the "bonne entente" strategy by the late 1910s. There was a decline in the share of editorials that called out authorities for attacking Franco-Ontarian rights including, of course, the move to implement Regulation 17. The statistical analysis in fact showed that the latter represented nearly 60 percent of all editorials in the General Topic Language and Religion from 1913 to 1917. It then dropped to 14 percent, and

hardly surpassed 20 percent until the matter was settled in the minority's favour in 1927. The entire General Topic experienced a similarly dramatic decline. Its low water mark of 14.6 percent in 1921 was a far cry from the almost 70 percent in 1917. Altering its position, it must be remembered, converged with an adjustment in how *Le Droit* encouraged the group's survival. As was shown in Chapters Two, Three, and Four, the organ increasingly promoted strategies to build Franco-Ontarian economic independence and financial wealth. Doing so, *Le Droit's* editorialists argued, could leverage political influence to guarantee group's rights. The newspaper's encouragement of a proactive defensive strategy led it to publish fewer and fewer editorials focused on threats to the minority's language rights. Rather, Franco-Ontarians heard more and more about how to increase their wealth to make them impervious to assimilationist attacks.

Several internal and external factors which contributed differently at different times were responsible for the important changes to the newspaper's focus, scope, and approaches. For one, heavy financial pressures left those who controlled the daily little choice but to consider deviating from their original plans. A desperate need to increase its revenue base ultimately convinced *Le Droit's* leadership to limit editorial content about fighting Regulation 17 and defending the Franco-Ontarian minority. As was explained, this shift was largely precipitated by changing consumer choices which saw *Le Droit's* initial format fall out of favour with the public. These readers wanted newspapers with greater diversity than was standard in ideological organs throughout the past century. Financial constraints likewise led *Le Droit* to expand its scope outside of Ontario. Catering to readers in Quebec was a sensible approach. The Outaouais region had a large population without a local French broadsheet focused on regional issues;

deciding to diversify its editorial content and reaching out to Quebec readers demonstrate *Le Droit*'s pragmatism under difficult circumstances. Its overseers were willing to implement measured changes if it meant keeping the publication in business. Catholic ideological newspapers, it must be remembered, were oftentimes prepared to alter their format by diversifying their content. Although some "bonne presse" remained relatively the same throughout their existence, others, like *L'Action catholique*, were open to expanding their focus, breadth, and even their design. These offerings met the tastes of the newspaper reading public as the era of traditional ideological broadsheets had ended.

Realistic opportunism also prompted the newspaper to implement a proactive approach to defending Franco-Ontarian rights. As we saw, it hastily adopted a "bonne entente" strategy coupled with promoting strategies to build the minority's political clout. The former was born out of the recognition that taking a hard-line approach to defending minority rights might embolden its adversaries rather than changing their minds. Meanwhile, those at the newspaper astutely recognized that economic strength could be leveraged as political power. This was an effective way to overcome the group's demographic weakness. *Le Droit* resultantly encouraged readers to use economic nationalism to gain the necessary power to influence policy-makers. Directly engaging in the political process also presented as a way to garner political influence in an environment where Franco-Ontarians were outnumbered. *Le Droit* consequently transgressed its intention of remaining out of the political fray. This action is another demonstration of how *Le Droit* was very practical when it came to meeting its core mission. Those at the organ were willing to adopt means that contradicted their initial intentions out of a commitment to the ends, ensuring the survival of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic minority. Their willingness to be

guided by conditions unique to their experience in Ontario affords us a different perspective of them. The laymen and Oblate clerics were quite open to adopting new strategies as matters warranted. This finding challenges any interpretation that argues that Franco-Ontarians were diehard believers in ultramontanist and resistant to change. Their unique circumstances did however limit their options. The Oblates' inability to provide ongoing capital meant that *Le Droit* had little choice but to change. The demographic weakness of the Franco-Ontarians also tied the hands of its leaders. They could not act in the same way, for instance, as the French-speaking Catholics in Quebec who were in a majority position. Instead, Ontario's minority had to act in ways that reflected their own financial and demographic circumstances. It is therefore evident that French-Canada was much less monolithic than has been argued.

Changes related to promoting social Catholicism

Aside from offering a newspaper to rally Ontario's French-speaking Catholic population against Regulation 17, *Le Droit* was an ideological tool to promote social Catholicism. As such, much of the organ's content focused on encouraging its readers to live according to Catholic ideals. By enlisting Father Charles Charlebois and Father Gabriel Sarrazin as Censorship Directors to 1933, *Le Droit*'s leaders ensured the newspaper followed a Catholic ideological newspaper format. Countless examples exist that *Le Droit* offered a healthy proportion of content in this vein. This type of material was, in fact, present in all General Topics examined qualitatively. For instance, the grouping Economy & Business contained pieces assailing businessmen for treating the working class, youth, and women unjustly. This conduct, according to the organ, was anathema to Christian values of fairness and of extending a helping hand to those in need. Similarly, editorials in the General Topic Labour Relations encouraged workers to

join labour groups, expressly Catholic unions, to hedge the exploitative practices of impious industrialists. While much of the material in the General Topic Family was about instructing readers to subscribe to traditional gendered conventions, the General Topic Values & Ideals included numerous pieces warning against inappropriate reading materials and the dangers of immoral and non-educational pastimes. The daily also continuously argued that societies who rejected Catholic ideals and/or embrace dangerous ideologies, faced rampant immorality, high crime rates, and chronic social instability. Conditions in French Canada were frequently juxtaposed to those in English-speaking Protestant Canada, the United States, and Russia, to show how Catholicism was a protective agent against social decay. These types of arguments routinely formed the basis of content found in the era's other ideological organs dedicated to promoting social Catholicism.¹

Le Droit's constant claim that the Church should have a preeminent place in society is also a hallmark of its continued commitment to its core “bonne presse” mandate. The newspaper vigorously campaigned to protect the Catholic Church's influence over temporal matters. The newspaper's argument that only the Church could dissolve marriages was emblematic of this viewpoint. That being said, it was not against using the State to ensure that people followed Catholic conventions. For example, the organ, even though it routinely argued against the State meddling in family matters, called for legislation to uphold the traditional family structure rooted in separate gendered spheres of influence. In this case it sought legislative measures to limit paid female employment and wanted the government to institute “baby bonuses” to encourage

¹ Like other Catholic “bonne presse” at that time, *Le Droit* oftentimes drew on the statements of religious leaders to lend credence to the ideological positions it promoted. This included drawing from papal encyclicals or pastoral letters as well as arguments advanced by Canadian clerics.

couples to have large families. Public officials were also asked to mitigate the negative outcomes of twentieth-century industrial capitalism. *Le Droit*, for instance, repeatedly demanded provisions to curb profiteering, and a minimum wage so the working class could live above the poverty line. The greatest proportion of editorials asking for government intervention focused on stamping out immoral and dangerous behavior. Specifically, the editorial pages called on elected officials to control alcohol production and distribution, restrict access to movie houses for younger people, and block the spread of the “yellow press”. By the late 1920s *Le Droit* devoted an increasing amount of editorial space to asking governments to clamp down on the spread of socialism and communism. In fact, it campaigned for measures banning the production of socialist and communist propaganda, outlawing organizations that promoted these ideologies, blocking immigration of suspected sympathisers, and arresting its Canadian leaders for their subversive behaviour.

As was shown in Chapter One, the anniversary and special edition editorials from 1914 to 1933 reiterated the newspaper’s devotion to the spread of social Catholicism. While the “bonne presse” topic was mentioned in nine of 10 anniversary edition editorials, it also appeared in five of the nine special editorials advancing *Le Droit*’s goals. However, its repeated claims to being a tool for ideological socialization did not necessarily coincide with its editorials. Although *Le Droit* continued to state that its editorials were in line with its ideological purpose, this content diminished as the years went on. As explained in Chapter One, content from the General Topic Religion and Language represented almost two-thirds of the editorial material published in 1913, although by 1920 its share of editorials was cut almost in half. By the end of the decade, the General Topic Religion and Language represented less than one-fifth of the organ’s editorial

content, and continued to shrink into the early 1930s, averaging below 20 percent of overall content. Other related General Topics (i.e. Education, Family, and Values & Ideals) similarly lost comparative importance. Diversifying *Le Droit*'s editorial content over the years occurred at the expense of material directly related to its core Catholic ideological organ mandate.

Le Droit's pre-launch missive and inaugural edition associated living according to social Catholicism with one of its auxiliary causes: encouraging people to embrace an agricultural way of life in a rural setting. Chapter Two showed how, in its early years, the newspaper routinely promoted this choice. For example, content from the Subheading Agriculture/Ruralism made the case for sweeping colonizing efforts, adding new curriculum to the education system to entice youth to choose agriculture, and living in rural settings led to happier, more prosperous lives. *Le Droit*'s support of farming and rural living reappeared in spades in the early 1930s. The Great Depression prompted the daily to join other Catholic organs that demanded colonization programs and sweeping initiatives to promote the agricultural sector. Re-settlement efforts to funnel some of the urban unemployed to the countryside, it maintained, would be less costly than supporting the growing mass of unemployed city-dwellers—and more importantly, it would establish a better equilibrium between rural and urban centers, which many believed was the root cause of the economic collapse.

Despite this initial pro-agricultural/rural stance, *Le Droit* paid decreasing attention to this founding precept. Most strikingly, this argument did not reappear in any of the anniversary editions or in the special editorials about the daily's *raison d'être*. Furthermore, the Subheading Agriculture/Ruralism quickly lost importance in the General Topic Economy & Business as

early as the late 1910s. By the mid-1920s it was somewhat of an afterthought as the newspaper increasingly encouraged readers to participate in the commercial and industrial economy of urban centers. Some of this content was in the General Topic Education—for instance, editorials that encouraged readers to tap into post-secondary educational opportunities that would lead them to well-paying jobs in skilled trades or various professional careers—but the majority of the content was in the General Topic Economy & Business. It included pieces promoting strategies to build the region’s commercial sector, as well as challenging the assumption that French-speaking people were ill-suited for the business world. This content might not be too much of a surprise since the pre-launch pamphlet had briefly mentioned that *Le Droit* would do its part to encourage industrial schools. But readers could never have imagined that by the early 1920s the greater majority of editorials about occupational choices would focus on wage-based or entrepreneurial opportunities in urban centers. This was certainly a far cry from how *Le Droit* positioned itself when it was launched, as well as from the importance it placed in its first few years on encouraging agricultural pursuits and living in rural regions.

It is important to remember that as *Le Droit* became more experienced in its approach to promoting the survival of the Franco-Ontarian minority, it regularly linked the following of Catholic ideals to the group’s resilience. A case in point is the editorials in the Subheading Gender Relations from the General Topic Family which argued that, due to their innate predisposition to lead in the public sphere, men should be at the forefront of the campaign against those seeking to assimilate Ontario’s French-language Catholic population. A post-secondary education would prepare males to assume their rightful role as leaders of the Franco-Ontarian community. Likewise, the newspaper encouraged its readers to join Catholic

institutions, organizations and movements to safeguard their unique cultural identity. This campaign was very much emblematic of other Catholic “bonne presse” of the period. The General Topic Economy & Business similarly presented content linking *Le Droit*’s two imperatives. Pieces which appeared in the organ’s initial years, for example, stated that living a traditional lifestyle in a rural setting would protect the Franco-Ontarian group’s cultural distinctiveness. The organ argued that moving to the city and joining the industrial workforce would make French-speaking Catholics vulnerable to losing their religious and linguistic uniqueness. The newspaper also told readers that using the financial practices it showcased, besides following social Catholic precepts, would prevent assimilation. Employing retail and wholesale cooperatives, joining a *Caisse Populaire Desjardins*, were just some of the tactics they could use to ensure their survival. *Le Droit* also promoted the belief that readers should spend wisely so they could donate to their brethren in need, thereby increasing the group’s overall wealth. These examples were part of the arguments presented in the General Topics Economy & Business and Values & Ideals which instructed Franco-Ontarians on how to gain their economic independence and increase their wealth to enhance their political influence. Encouraging the minority to join Catholic groups or Church-sponsored efforts were linked to the push to leverage the advantages of economic nationalism. Skillfully weaving these efforts together allowed *Le Droit* to fulfill its two primary aims simultaneously.

The same factors that influenced how *Le Droit* campaigned for Franco-Ontarian rights caused the transformations that impacted content related to social Catholicism. For one thing, financial considerations led *Le Droit* to significantly reduce the amount of material it printed about faith-based topics. By the early twentieth-century, only a small proportion of newspaper

readers were interested in buying traditional and uninspiring ideological dailies with limited content. Although very conservative broadsheets continued to be published, they were exceptions in the newspaper marketplace, destined to remain niche offerings for a limited readership. Archival evidence has shown that *Le Droit*'s editors recognized that they had to meet public demand for diversified content as the commercial newspapers did. Gradually decreasing the amount of content about religious matters shows that the lay and clerical leaders behind *Le Droit* were open to change in order to meet evolving tastes. They made a pragmatic decision to liven up their publication. They understood that staying the course would turn off readers leading to certain financial ruin. Preserving their tool of ideological socialization was paramount to them, so tweaking the *bonne presse*'s approach was acceptable given external circumstances, including the Oblates' inability to fund *Le Droit*'s operations, and the reality of the changing newspaper market.

Some of the editorial positions *Le Droit* took were also responses to forces beyond the control of the French-speaking Catholic minority. For instance, changing Ontario and federal voting laws put the editors in a difficult position: *Le Droit* could tow the traditional Catholic line by arguing women should stay out of the public sphere. Doing so would, however, further reduce the minority's electoral power given it was expected that some English-speaking Protestant women would use their suffrage rights. *Le Droit* had to make a choice between adhering to traditional Catholic teachings or doing what was in the best interests of the Franco-Ontarian minority. Father Charlebois ultimately chose to allow opinion pieces encouraging women to vote even though it broke with the traditional gender constructs of Catholicism. Doing so must have seemed a "necessary evil" in the face of the minority's increasingly political vulnerability.

This “survival pragmatism” is evident in content in the General Topics Education and Economy & Business that likewise contradicted conventional Catholic edicts. In the former case readers were told it was vital for youth to pursue post-secondary schooling because an advanced education would open the door to high level, well-paying, and influential careers. These job opportunities would allow Franco-Ontarians to gain the requisite financial and social capital to guard against being assimilated. While some ideological organs steeped in social Catholicism argued that a traditional farming and rural lifestyle delivered true happiness, *Le Droit* recognised that Ontario’s French-speaking Catholic population had to take a different approach because it was fighting for its survival in a rapidly industrialized wage-based economy. In short, post-secondary studies would provide access to the best paying and most influential jobs found in urban centers as well as political clout. The same reasoning fuelled the daily’s campaign to build up the community’s financial wealth. The General Topic Economy & Business included many opinion pieces showcasing different business strategies readers could use to increase their personal capital. The editorialists argued that the wealth from successful business and commercial ventures could be used to influence public policy. Although many Catholic clerics and laymen in Quebec believed rural settings provided the most wholesome environment for French-Canadians, *Le Droit*’s leadership saw this approach as unworkable given the realities of French Ontario. Franco-Ontarians desperately needed to become commercial and industrial leaders to counter-balance their demographic weakness.

Potential research avenues

This dissertation has covered a lot of territory and highlighted several interesting elements about *Le Droit*, the Franco-Ontarian leadership and, by extension, Ontario’s French-

speaking Catholic minority. There is however more to be learned about how the newspaper's culture of pragmatism influenced its operations and publication strategies. For instance, examining content from 1913 to 1933 that fell outside of the scope of this exploration, as well as extending the analysis past 1933, would certainly provide a richer picture of the newspaper's inner workings and, most interestingly, the editors' mindset. Future works could delve more deeply into the process whereby *Le Droit* overlooked its original mandate of offering a pan-provincial daily exclusively for Ontario's French-speaking minority. As we saw, the daily ostensibly transgressed this core aim in the early 1920s by adding editorial content to cater to Quebec audiences in Hull, Aylmer, Gatineau and the surroundings areas. It would be interesting to uncover how this change in strategy impacted the organ's non-editorial content. One way to do so would be to undertake a quantitative review of news stories by "intended audience"—i.e. content related to matters that occurred in Ontario or Quebec along with topics of interest to people in one or the other location. This could be accomplished by completing a statistical analysis of news stories coded by "intended audience location" from 1913 to 1933. It is expected that, early on, a greater majority of this type of material was about, or of interest to, Ontarians. Yet, one wonders if, as time went on, *Le Droit* published a greater share of material for Quebec-based readers to match its editorial policy. A similar approach could be used by examining how speciality columns—for instance, "Nouvelles du Nord" and "Sudbury et les environs"—published for specific locations in Ontario with a high proportion of French-speaking people were impacted by this change. Cataloguing this content from the initial few years of publication would likely show how much effort *Le Droit* expended to meet its initial goal of publishing content for Franco-Ontarians wherever they might be in the province. It would also reveal how long the daily continued to offer this type of dedicated content and the timeline of its decline.

Such a focus would offer insight into the process that led to *Le Droit* eventually abandoning its provincial organ mission. We would thus better understand the route *Le Droit* took to change from a pan-provincial organ to a regional newspaper.

Another interesting point of investigation would be to see how the change in the Censorship Director's position in 1933 impacted the Oblates' influence. Essentially, it would expose the extent to which the religious order continued to guide *Le Droit*'s operations and publication practices after a layman assumed this role. Assessing the matter should begin by examining the newspaper's administrative documents and related content in various archival holdings—i.e. the Syndicats d'oeuvres sociales limitée, the Association canadienne-française d'éducation de l'Ontario, and the Ordre de Jacques Cartier. We would gain insight into internal discussions about the newspaper's publication policies. The private holdings of laymen and clerics tied to *Le Droit* would also offer a clearer perspective on the matter of Oblate influence on *Le Droit*'s operations and content. The role played by men who filled the Censorship Director position after Father Sarrazin would help us understand whether they had full independence in their publishing decisions, or if the Oblates in fact guided their decision-making. A quantitative analysis should be undertaken whereby material in the newspaper would be coded into either "religious" or "non-religious" categories. A statistical analysis of their comparative strength (specific number of items, coverage by column length, and placement in the newspaper) from one year to the next would uncover the organ's transformation. The totality of the findings would shed light on how the broadsheet completed its eventual transformation into a full-fledged commercial newspaper independent of Catholic influence. This examination would establish a

link between the ideological organ readers purchased in its early years, and the publication that is currently on offer a century after it first appeared.

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APPENDIX A:
***Le Droit's* Most Prominent Editorialists—1913 to 1933**
(By Order of Contribution)

Name	Year of Birth & Location	Education	Editorial Contribution
J. Albert Foisy	1887 New Bedford Massachusetts, U.S.	Université Laval (Quebec City, QC)	6/2/1916 to 5/15/1920
Charles Gautier	1893 Mans, France	Université de Poitiers (Poitiers, France) and Université d'Ottawa (Ottawa, ON)	8/9/1916 to the end of the period.
Thomas Poulin	1888 Saint-Joseph de Beauce, QC	Collège de Lévis (Lévis, QC)	6/5/1916 to 1/12/1922
Fulgence Charpentier	1897 Sainte-Anne-de-Prescott, QC	Osgoode Hall (Toronto, ON)	3/29/1919 to 9/22/1919 and 4/18/1922 to 2/9/1925
J. Edmond Cloutier	1893 St-Narcisse de Champlain, QC	Université d'Ottawa (Ottawa, ON)	9/17/1919 to 5/16/1921
Harry Bernard	1898 London, England	Séminaire de Saint- Hyacinthe (Saint-Hyacinthe, QC)	9/17/1920 to 4/9/1923
Henri Lessard	1893 Sainte-Ursule, QC	École Jacques-Cartier (Montréal, QC)	1/14/1922 to the end of the period.
Charles Michaud	Not available	Not available	1/20/1925 to 5/19/1930.
Camille L'Heureux	1898 Saint-Jude, QC	Séminaire de Saint- Hyacinthe (Saint-Hyacinthe, QC)	6/29/1928 to the end of the period.
Léopold Richer	1902 Ottawa, ON	Université d'Ottawa (Ottawa, ON)	6/2/1930 to the end of the period.

APPENDIX B:
Thematic Index of General Topics
with Related Subheadings

1) General Topic: Religion and Language

Subheadings:

- Discrimination (material discussing Catholic or French-language discrimination aside from Regulation 17)
- Importance of Catholicism
- Importance of Catholic Education (material discussing the moral importance of infusing education with spiritual doctrine; material containing calls for funding for these institutions via taxation allocations).
- Importance of Catholic Organisations (Association Canadienne-Française de l'Éducation de l'Ontario, Voyageurs de Commerce, Société St-Jean Baptiste, etc.)
- Importance of Catholic Press (material promoting the importance of organ's reflecting catholic ideals)
- Language (material discussing language issues including the promotion of French in the community and throughout Canada; it includes material regarding ensuring the use of French in schooling after the removal of Regulation 17)
- Mixed Marriages (material opposing marriages between Protestants and Catholics)
- Pride (material promoting community pride)
- Religion (material discussing news pertaining to the Catholic Church or about Catholicism)
- Regulation 17
- Regulation 17 and Catholicism

Material related to the above subheadings discussed in the context of World War I:

- Discrimination and WWI
- Importance of Catholicism and WWI
- Language and WWI
- Religion and Post WWI
- Regulation 17 and WWI
- Regulation 17 and WWI Military Participation
- Religion and WWI

2) General Topic: General Matters

Subheadings:

- Foreign Affairs (material related to news from other countries)
- Not Important (material pertaining to matters that do not fall into any other category that are of little consequence—usually discussing specific matters such as a local crime or event)

Material related to the above subheadings discussed in the context of World War I:

- Foreign Affairs and Post WWI (articles discussing foreign affair matters directly related to the outcome of World War I—League of Nations, reparations...)

3) General Topic: Canadian Identity

Subheadings:

- Canadian Nationalism & Imperialism (material discussing the evolution of a distinct Canadian identity and economic sovereignty including perceptions about political and economic ties to the British Empire)

Material related to the above subheadings directly discussed in the context of World War I:

- Canadian Nationalism & Imperialism and WWI (including articles about National Duty discussing what Canadians should do to help the war effort--buying bonds, joining the army, producing war goods...)

4) General Topic: Economy & Business

Subheadings:

- Agriculture/Ruralism (editorials about the benefits of agricultural work and living in rural settings)
- Commercial Participation (content promoting the participation of French-language people in commercial/industrial wage labour or ventures including business ownership)
- Cooperatives (material that promotes the use of cooperative institutions including the Caisse Populaire Desjardins or rural cooperative organizations. Also included is material regarding commercial organisations such as business trusts)
- Resource Industries (material about mining, forestry, and hydro-electric industries as well as relocating to northern regions to participate in these sectors)

Material related to the above subheadings directly discussed in the context of World War I:

- Agriculture/Ruralism and WWI

Material related to the above subheadings discussed in the context of the Great Depression:

- Agriculture/Ruralism and Great Depression
- Agriculture/Ruralism and Great Depression—solution
- Commercial Participation and Great Depression—solution

5) General Topic: Education

Subheadings:

- Higher Education (material promoting post-secondary studies at skilled trades' institutes and general education institutions. Also includes universities and professional designation institutes)
- Lifelong Learning (material about opportunities for professional development and capacity-building for youth and adults)
- Primary & Secondary Education (material advising parents to send their children to primary school, keep them in school as long as possible as well as campaigns to provide qualified teachers. It also touches upon the discussion of mandating childhood education)

6) General Topic: Family

Subheadings:

- Divorce (material debating the push to make divorce easier)
- Gender Roles (material promoting traditional gender roles for men and women—appropriate work, participation in the public sphere and division of responsibilities in the home)
- Reproduction (material about the need for higher birth rates to promote the growth of Ontario's French-speaking Catholic community)

Material related to the above subheadings discussed in the context of the Great Depression:

- Gender Roles and Great Depression—solution

7) General Topic: Labour Relations

Subheadings:

- Immorality in Business & Class Issues (material discussing corrupt business practices and tensions between social groups)
- Organised Labour (editorials discussing the rise of the labour movement, specific unions, and labour actions)
- Socialism & Communism

Material related to the above subheadings directly discussed in the context of World War I:

- Immorality in Business & Class Issues and WWI

Material related to the above subheadings discussed in the context of the Great Depression:

- Immorality in Business & Class Issues and Great Depression
- Socialism & Communism and Great Depression

8) General Topic: Politics

Subheadings:

- Federal Politics (news regarding federal political matters; opinions regarding political parties/representatives)
- Miscellaneous Provincial Politics (news regarding other provincial political matters; opinions regarding political parties/representatives)
- Municipal Politics (Hull) (news regarding municipal political matters; opinions regarding parties/representatives)
- Municipal Politics (Ottawa) (news regarding municipal political matters; opinions regarding parties/representatives; matters regarding school administration)
- Political Ideals (discussing matters relating to the division of powers in the federation, the role of the Church versus the State in society, democracy etc.)
- Political Participation (discussing the responsibility of political participation as well as matters about voting)
- Provincial Politics (ON) (news regarding Ontario political matters; opinions regarding political parties/representatives)
- Provincial Politics (QC) (news regarding Quebec political matters; opinions regarding political parties/representatives)
- Political Representation (discussing adequate political representation of French-language persons in politics and issues of proper political representation within the political system)

9) General Topic: Public Policies

Subheadings:

- Government Intervention—Commerce & Industry (material about government intervention via legislation)
- Government Intervention—Health & Welfare (content about government intervention via the emergence of social welfare programs or laws)
- Government Intervention—Nationalisation (editorials about the government take-over of industries)
- Tariffs (material discussing tariffs and trade with foreign countries)
- Migration (editorials discussing immigration policy and matters of migration)

- Taxation (content discussing all forms of taxation as well as fiscal expenditures including budget making)

Material related to the above subheadings directly discussed in the context of World War I:

- Government Intervention—Commerce and Industry and WWI

Material related to the above subheadings discussed in the context of the Great Depression:

- Government Intervention—Commerce & Industry and Great Depression
- Government Intervention—Health & Welfare and Great Depression
- Migration and Great Depression—solution
- Tariffs and Great Depression—solution
- Taxes and Great Depression

10) General Topic: Values & Ideals

Subheadings:

- Morality (editorials discussing swearing/going to the cinema/proper attire/appropriate reading material as well as enforcement strategies including voluntary and legislated approaches)
- Temperance/Prohibition (content about alcohol consumption and public availability including voluntary or legislated enforcement strategies)
- Use of Income (material promoting sensible money management and donating to charitable organizations)

Material related to the above subheadings directly discussed in the context of World War I:

- Temperance/Prohibition and WWI
- Use of Income and WWI

Material related to the above subheadings discussed in the context of the Great Depression:

- Use of Income and Great Depression

11) General Topic: World War I

Subheading: Causes

12) General Topic: Great Depression

Subheadings:

- Causes (includes a myriad of factors that are noted as having contributed to the crisis)
- Consequences

APPENDIX C:
General Topics per Year
(Percentage in Parentheses)

	Total	Religion & Language	General Matters	Canadian Identity	Economy & Business	Education	Family	Labour Relations	Politics	Public Policies	Values & Ideals
1913	361	233 (64.5%)	36 (10.0%)	1 (0.3%)	20 (5.5%)	9 (2.5%)	10 (2.8%)	8 (2.2%)	18 (5.0%)	9 (2.5%)	17 (4.7%)
1914	432	243 (56.3%)	43 (10.0%)	11 (2.5%)	50 (11.6%)	8 (1.9%)	6 (1.4%)	6 (1.4%)	27 (6.3%)	17 (3.9%)	21 (4.9%)
1915	405	283 (69.9%)	28 (6.9%)	6 (1.5%)	34 (8.4%)	7 (1.7%)	4 (1.0%)	1 (0.2%)	15 (3.7%)	9 (2.2%)	18 (4.4%)
1916	425	233 (54.8%)	56 (13.2%)	21 (4.9%)	28 (6.6%)	21 (4.9%)	3 (0.7%)	20 (4.7%)	15 (3.5%)	6 (1.4%)	22 (5.2%)
1917	243	105 (43.2%)	22 (9.1%)	44 (18.1%)	13 (5.3%)	5 (2.1%)	8 (3.3%)	1 (0.4%)	28 (11.5%)	8 (3.3%)	9 (3.7%)
1918	430	198 (46.0%)	103 (24.0%)	27 (6.3%)	9 (2.1%)	6 (1.4%)	14 (3.3%)	20 (4.7%)	34 (7.9%)	10 (2.3%)	9 (2.1%)
1919	422	176 (41.7%)	64 (15.2%)	23 (5.5%)	10 (2.4%)	8 (1.9%)	7 (1.7%)	61 (14.5%)	45 (10.75)	11 (2.6%)	17 (4.0%)
1920	405	132 (32.6%)	55 (13.6%)	22 (5.4%)	31 (7.7%)	10 (2.5%)	9 (2.2%)	49 (12.1%)	34 (8.4%)	32 (7.9%)	31 (7.7%)
1921	535	78 (14.6%)	41 (7.7%)	13 (2.4%)	24 (4.5%)	16 (3.0%)	12 (2.2%)	157 (29.3%)	100 (18.7%)	69 (12.9%)	25 (4.7%)
1922	566	177 (31.3%)	44 (7.8%)	38 (6.7%)	33 (5.8%)	17 (3.0%)	16 (2.8%)	73 (12.9%)	93 (16.4%)	42 (7.4%)	33 (5.8%)
1923	601	212 (35.3%)	43 (7.2%)	31 (5.2%)	24 (4.0%)	17 (2.8%)	5 (0.8%)	67 (11.1%)	135 (22.5%)	43 (7.2%)	24 (4.0%)
1924	593	197 (33.2%)	46 (7.8%)	25 (4.2%)	26 (4.4%)	13 (2.2%)	1 (0.2%)	57 (9.6%)	158 (26.6%)	46 (7.8%)	24 (4.0%)
1925	530	170 (32.1%)	41 (7.7%)	25 (4.7%)	22 (4.2%)	6 (1.1%)	9 (1.7%)	44 (8.3%)	156 (29.4%)	35 (6.6%)	22 (4.2%)
1926	604	159 (26.3%)	55 (9.1%)	38 (6.3%)	21 (3.5%)	6 (1.0%)	3 (0.5%)	54 (8.9%)	212 (35.1%)	28 (4.6%)	28 (4.6%)
1927	708	179 (25.3%)	49 (6.9%)	57 (8.1%)	28 (4.0%)	9 (1.3%)	9 (1.3%)	33 (4.7%)	157 (22.2%)	156 (22.0%)	31 (4.4%)
1928	633	133 (21.0%)	75 (11.8%)	36 (5.7%)	44 (7.0%)	5 (0.8%)	13 (2.1%)	37 (5.8%)	97 (15.3%)	161 (25.4%)	32 (5.1%)
1929	717	126 (17.6%)	131 (18.3%)	42 (5.9%)	38 (5.3%)	17 (2.4%)	12 (1.7%)	49 (6.8%)	143 (19.9%)	145 (20.2%)	14 (2.0%)
1930	643	132 (20.5%)	112 (17.4%)	28 (4.4%)	22 (3.4%)	17 (2.6%)	9 (1.4%)	44 (6.8%)	193 (30.0%)	65 (10.1%)	21 (3.3%)
1931	580	106 (18.3%)	105 (18.1%)	13 (2.2%)	52 (9.0%)	16 (2.8%)	12 (2.1%)	67 (11.6%)	129 (22.2%)	50 (8.6%)	30 (5.2%)
1932	599	78 (13.0%)	89 (14.9%)	11 (1.8%)	93 (15.5%)	11 (1.8%)	10 (1.7%)	45 (7.5%)	125 (20.9%)	119 (19.9%)	18 (3.0%)
1933	296	51 (17.2%)	55 (18.6%)	3 (1.0%)	28 (9.5%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.7%)	13 (4.4%)	100 (33.8%)	41 (13.9%)	3 (1.0%)

APPENDIX D:
General Topics per Year
(Rank in Parentheses)

	Total	Religion & Language	General Matters	Canadian Identity	Economy & Business	Education	Family	Labour Relations	Politics	Public Policies	Values & Ideals
1913	361	233 (1)	36 (2)	1 (10)	20 (3)	9 (7)	10 (6)	8 (9)	18 (4)	9 (7)	17 (5)
1914	432	243 (1)	43 (3)	11 (7)	50 (2)	8 (8)	6 (10)	6 (9)	27 (40)	17 (6)	21 (5)
1915	405	283 (1)	28 (3)	6 (8)	34 (2)	7 (7)	4 (9)	1 (10)	15 (5)	9 (6)	18 (4)
1916	425	233 (1)	56 (2)	21 (5)	28 (3)	21 (5)	3 (10)	20 (7)	15 (8)	6 (9)	22 (4)
1917	243	105 (1)	22 (4)	44 (2)	13 (5)	5 (9)	8 (7)	1 (10)	28 (3)	8 (7)	9 (6)
1918	430	198 (1)	103 (2)	27 (4)	9 (8)	6 (10)	14 (6)	20 (5)	34 (3)	10 (7)	9 (8)
1919	422	176 (1)	64 (2)	23 (5)	10 (8)	8 (9)	7 (10)	61 (3)	45 (4)	11 (7)	17 (6)
1920	405	132 (1)	55 (2)	22 (8)	31 (6)	10 (9)	9 (10)	49 (3)	34 (4)	32 (5)	31 (6)
1921	535	78 (3)	41 (5)	13 (9)	24 (7)	16 (8)	12 (10)	157 (1)	100 (2)	69 (4)	25 (6)
1922	566	177 (1)	44 (4)	38 (6)	33 (7)	17 (9)	16 (10)	73 (3)	93 (2)	42 (5)	33 (7)
1923	601	212 (1)	43 (4)	31 (6)	24 (7)	17 (9)	5 (10)	67 (3)	135 (2)	43 (4)	24 (7)
1924	593	197 (1)	46 (4)	25 (7)	26 (6)	13 (9)	1 (10)	57 (3)	158 (2)	46 (4)	24 (8)
1925	530	170 (1)	41 (4)	25 (6)	22 (7)	6 (10)	9 (9)	44 (3)	156 (2)	35 (5)	22 (7)
1926	604	159 (2)	55 (3)	38 (5)	21 (8)	6 (9)	3 (10)	54 (4)	212 (1)	28 (6)	28 (6)
1927	708	179 (1)	49 (5)	57 (4)	28 (8)	9 (9)	9 (9)	33 (6)	157 (2)	156 (3)	31 (7)
1928	633	133 (2)	75 (4)	36 (7)	44 (5)	5 (10)	13 (9)	37 (6)	97 (3)	161 (1)	32 (8)
1929	717	126 (4)	131 (3)	42 (6)	38 (7)	17 (8)	12 (10)	49 (5)	143 (2)	145 (1)	14 (9)
1930	643	132 (2)	112 (3)	28 (6)	22 (7)	17 (9)	9 (10)	44 (5)	193 (1)	65 (4)	21 (8)
1931	580	106 (2)	105 (3)	13 (9)	52 (5)	16 (8)	12 (10)	67 (4)	129 (1)	50 (6)	30 (7)
1932	599	78 (5)	89 (4)	11 (8)	93 (3)	11 (8)	10 (10)	45 (6)	125 (1)	119 (2)	18 (7)
1933	296	51 (3)	55 (2)	3 (7)	28 (5)	0 (10)	2 (9)	13 (6)	100 (1)	41 (4)	3 (7)

APPENDIX E:
General Topic Values & Ideals and its Subheadings per Year
(Rank in Parentheses)

	General Topic: Values & Ideals	Subheading: Morality	Subheading: Use of Income	Subheading: Temperance/ Prohibition
1913	17	8 (1)	2 (3)	7 (2)
1914	21	6 (2)	14 (1)	1 (3)
1915	18	3 (3)	6 (2)	9 (1)
1916	22	3 (3)	5 (2)	14 (1)
1917	9	2 (2)	2 (2)	5 (1)
1918	9	5 (1)	2 (2)	2 (2)
1919	17	6 (2)	2 (3)	9 (1)
1920	31	13 (1)	10 (2)	8 (3)
1921	25	11 (2)	2 (3)	12 (1)
1922	33	23 (1)	4 (3)	6 (2)
1923	24	15 (1)	6 (2)	3 (3)
1924	24	15 (1)	5 (2)	4 (3)
1925	22	19 (1)	1 (3)	2 (2)
1926	29	16 (1)	5 (3)	7 (2)
1927	31	27 (1)	3 (2)	1 (3)
1928	31	21 (1)	7 (2)	4 (3)
1929	14	8 (1)	4 (2)	2 (3)
1930	21	11 (1)	9 (2)	1 (3)
1931	30	13 (2)	15 (1)	2 (3)
1932	18	8 (1)	9 (1)	1 (3)
1933	3	1 (2)	2 (1)	0 (3)
Total	449	234	115	100

APPENDIX F:
General Topic Education and its Subheadings per Year
(Rank in Parentheses)

	General Topic: Education	Subheading: Higher Education	Subheading: Early Education	Subheading: Lifelong Learning
1913	9	4 (1)	4 (1)	1 (3)
1914	8	5 (1)	1 (3)	2 (2)
1915	7	3 (1)	3 (1)	1 (3)
1916	21	14 (1)	1 (3)	6 (2)
1917	5	3 (1)	1 (2)	1 (2)
1918	6	3 (1)	2 (2)	1 (3)
1919	8	2 (2)	6 (1)	0 (3)
1920	10	5 (1)	1 (3)	4 (2)
1921	16	9 (1)	6 (2)	1 (3)
1922	17	9 (1)	6 (2)	2 (3)
1923	17	7 (2)	8 (1)	2 (3)
1924	13	7 (1)	3 (2)	3 (2)
1925	6	3 (1)	3 (1)	0 (3)
1926	6	1 (3)	3 (1)	2 (2)
1927	9	4 (1)	4 (1)	1 (3)
1928	5	2 (1)	2 (1)	1 (3)
1929	17	5 (2)	9 (1)	3 (3)
1930	17	10 (1)	6 (2)	1 (3)
1931	16	5 (2)	10 (1)	1 (3)
1932	11	2 (2)	7 (1)	2 (2)
1933	0	0	0	0
Total	224	103	86	35

APPENDIX G:
General Topic Family and its Subheadings per Year
(Rank in Parentheses)

	General Topic: Family	Subheading: Gender Roles	Subheading: Divorce	Subheading: Reproduction
1913	10	10 (1)	0 (2)	0 (2)
1914	6	6 (1)	0 (2)	0 (2)
1915	4	4 (1)	0 (2)	0 (2)
1916	3	2 (1)	0 (3)	1 (2)
1917	8	6 (1)	1 (2)	1 (2)
1918	14	8 (1)	3 (2)	3 (2)
1919	7	5 (1)	2 (2)	0 (3)
1920	9	2 (2)	6 (1)	1 (3)
1921	12	8 (1)	3 (2)	1 (3)
1922	16	11 (1)	3 (2)	2 (3)
1923	5	3 (1)	0 (3)	2 (2)
1924	1	0 (2)	1 (1)	0 (2)
1925	9	8 (1)	1 (1)	0 (3)
1926	3	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)
1927	8	3 (2)	2 (3)	4 (1)
1928	13	5 (2)	6 (1)	2 (3)
1929	12	6 (1)	6 (1)	0 (3)
1930	9	1 (3)	6 (1)	2 (2)
1931	12	6 (1)	2 (3)	4 (2)
1932	10	9 (1)	0 (3)	1 (2)
1933	2	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (3)
Total	173	104	44	25

APPENDIX H:
General Topic Economy & Business and its Subheadings per Year
(Rank in Parentheses)

	General Topic: Economy & Business	Subheading: Agriculture/ Ruralism	Subheading: Commercial Participation	Subheading: Cooperatives	Subheading: Resource Industries
1913	21	12 (1)	3 (3)	6 (2)	0 (4)
1914	49	35 (1)	4 (3)	10 (2)	0 (4)
1915	34	16 (1)	10 (2)	7 (3)	1 (4)
1916	32	17 (1)	9 (2)	6 (3)	0 (4)
1917	14	11 (1)	2 (2)	1 (3)	0 (4)
1918	11	6 (1)	1 (3)	3 (2)	1 (3)
1919	10	3 (2)	5 (1)	1 (3)	1 (3)
1920	27	12 (1)	9 (2)	6 (3)	0 (4)
1921	22	11 (1)	6 (2)	4 (3)	1 (4)
1922	35	9 (2)	22 (1)	2 (3)	2 (3)
1923	24	3 (2)	16 (1)	3 (2)	2 (4)
1924	27	7 (2)	15 (1)	4 (3)	1 (4)
1925	23	11 (1)	9 (2)	2 (3)	1 (4)
1926	20	1 (2)	18 (1)	1 (2)	0 (4)
1927	30	7 (2)	17 (1)	3 (3)	3 (3)
1928	48	11 (2)	31 (1)	3 (3)	3 (3)
1929	40	17 (2)	21 (1)	1 (3)	1 (3)
1930	24	9 (2)	11 (1)	2 (3)	2 (3)
1931	54	39 (1)	14 (2)	1 (3)	0 (4)
1932	96	77 (1)	18 (2)	0 (4)	1 (3)
1933	32	13 (2)	18 (1)	0 (4)	1 (3)
Total	673	327	259	66	21

APPENDIX I:
General Topic Labour Relations
and its Subheadings per Year
(Rank in Parentheses)

	General Topic: Labour Relations	Subheading: Organised Labour		Subheading: Immorality in Business & Class Issues		Subheading: Socialism & Communism	
1913	8	1 (3)	12.5%	3 (2)	37.5%	4 (1)	50.0%
1914	6	1 (2)	16.7%	5 (1)	83.3%	0 (3)	0.0%
1915	1	0 (2)	0.0%	1 (1)	100.0%	0 (2)	0.0%
1916	20	2 (2)	10.0%	18 (1)	90.0%	0 (3)	0.0%
1917	1	0 (2)	0.0%	1 (1)	100.0%	0 (2)	0.0%
1918	20	5 (3)	25.0%	9 (1)	45.0%	6 (2)	30.0%
1919	61	30 (1)	49.2%	15 (3)	24.6%	16 (2)	26.2%
1920	49	31 (1)	63.3%	16 (2)	32.7%	2 (3)	4.1%
1921	157	134 (1)	85.4%	19 (2)	12.1%	4 (3)	2.5%
1922	73	49 (1)	67.1%	23 (2)	31.5%	1 (3)	1.4%
1923	67	49 (1)	73.1%	18 (2)	26.9%	0 (3)	0.0%
1924	57	45 (1)	78.9%	9 (2)	15.8%	3 (3)	5.3%
1925	44	23 (1)	52.3%	13 (2)	29.5%	8 (3)	18.2%
1926	54	43 (1)	79.6%	11 (2)	20.4%	0 (3)	0.0%
1927	33	14 (1)	42.4%	7 (3)	21.2%	12 (2)	36.4%
1928	37	23 (1)	62.2%	8 (2)	21.6%	6 (3)	16.2%
1929	49	26 (1)	53.1%	9 (3)	18.4%	14 (2)	28.6%
1930	44	16 (2)	36.4%	9 (3)	20.5%	19 (1)	43.2%
1931	67	10 (3)	14.9%	30 (1)	44.8%	27 (2)	40.3%
1932	45	15 (1)	33.3%	15 (1)	33.3%	15 (1)	33.3%
1933	13	3 (3)	23.1%	4 (2)	30.8%	6 (1)	46.2%
Total	906	520		243		143	

APPENDIX J:
Distribution of Subheadings and Subjects
in the General Topic Labour Relations
(Percentage in Parentheses)

	Editorials	1913- 1929*	1929-1933
Organized Labour	520	466 (89.6%)	54 (10.4%)
Approval of labour movement	72	56 (77.7%)	16 (22.3%)
Catholic Church's position	55	47 (85.5%)	8 (14.6%)
Catholic unions	245	218 (89%)	27 (11%)
International unions	130	123 (94.6%)	7 (5.4%)
Strikes	79	76 (96.2%)	3 (3.8%)
Immorality in Business & Class Issues	243	179 (73.6%)	64 (26.4%)
Unfair treatment of the public	126	92 (73%)	34 (27%)
Question sociale	59	47 (79.6%)	12 (20.3%)
Business sector	27	15 (55.5%)	12 (44.5%)
Socialism & Communism	143	73 (51%)	70 (49%)
Measures to stop expansion	88	39 (44.4%)	49 (55.6%)
Outcomes of adoption	75	43 (57.3%)	32 (42.7%)
Promotion	41	31 (75.6%)	10 (24.4%)
Utopian promises	18	12 (66.6%)	6 (33.3%)
	906	718 (79.25%)	188 (20.75%)

**The periods are divided by the October 24, 1929 Stock Market Crash which sparked the Great Depression.*